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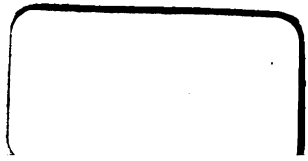

Chis wick press printing
of "rural" poet

2944

WAYSIDE WARBLES.

WAYSIDE WARBLES.

BY EDWARD CAPERN.

RURAL POSTMAN OF BIDEFORD, DEVON.

AUTHOR OF "POEMS," "BALLADS AND SONGS," AND THE "DEVONSHIRE MELODIST."

"How often have I paused on every charm,—
The sheltered cot, the cultivated farm,
The never failing brook, the busy mill,
The decent church that topped the neighbouring hill.
The hawthorn bush, with seats beneath the shade,
For talking age and whispering lovers made."

GOLDSMITH.

LONDON:

SAMPSON LOW, SON, AND MARSTON,

MILTON HOUSE, LUDGATE HILL.

1865.

The right of translation is reserved.

PREFACE.

IN sending forth a third volume of his lyrics to the world, the author is desirous of saying a few words in prose, which may prove acceptable to some of his friends.

First of all these poems are what their title indicates them to be, genuine *Wayside* Warbles, the major part of them having been thought out and written by him in the open air, while doing duty as a rural postman. It may also be of interest to give some little idea of the manner in which they have been worked up. Some object or incident, or a conversation with a rustic by the roadside, has often suggested matter for a short song, which the author has frequently thrown off at the moment in the presence of a fair inspirer, or a more brawny

companion. Having sung his ditty as he composed it—as in the case of "Bonnie Maggie Ilton," "Merry Labour," "A Song in Sunshine," and others,—his next care has been to rescue such as he has deemed worthy from oblivion. Hence the rude bar of a Devonshire stile or field-gate has often served him for a writing-desk. Or seated on the side of some friendly hedge, his post-bag resting on his knees, he has pencilled out his thoughts in the rough, to be polished up in the little cottage when he arrives at the end of his outward journey.

Whether what little genius for singing he is said to possess is essentially lyrical or not, he cannot say; certain it is, circumstances have made it so: his occupation having broken his time up into fragments, thereby compelling him to be content with penning a short piece when he might otherwise have attempted a longer poem. It is very pleasant, however, for him to think that his songs, short and simple as they are, have found favour in the eyes of those whose praise is honour, if not fame, and to know that that favour is daily increasing; as a proof of which he would mention that during the last two

or three years he has been repeatedly solicited by all classes of his countrymen to publish another volume. To that call he has responded by making a selection from his unpublished jottings; and his earnest hope is that the same originality, freshness, and simplicity, which marked his former works may be found in the present one, with some little certain sign of poetic growth.

One word touching that portion of the volume entitled "Willow Leaves." To those who have passed through a great sorrow like the writer no word of excuse is at all necessary; to those who have not, the only apology he would make must be in the words of our own beloved Coleridge:— "The communicativeness of our nature leads us to describe our own sorrows; in the endeavour to describe them, intellectual activity is exerted; and from intellectual activity there results a pleasure, which is gradually associated, and mingles as a corrective, with the painful subject of the description. 'True!' it may be answered, 'but how is the public interested in your sorrows or your descriptions?' What is 'the public' but a term for a number of scattered individuals? of whom as

many will be interested in these sorrows, as have experienced the same or similar:

> 'Holy be the lay,
> Which, mourning, soothes the mourner on his way.'"

And now, in taking leave of his readers, he would ask them kindly to bear in mind, that those of his lyrics illustrating some phase of human experience, were written under the influence of their corresponding moods of mirth and sadness, joy and sorrow; the pen oftentimes doing the bidding of the heart more than the fancy, while the author has ever aimed to be natural rather than fine, always bearing in mind a critique on one of his poems which an old village dame once pronounced: "'Tis as natural as life, and if it isn't true, it ought to be."

E. C.

Marine Gardens, Bideford,
July 8th, 1865.

CONTENTS.

Wayside Warbles.

	Page
DEDICATION	3
The Poet's Duty	5
My Excuse	7
A Warble	9
When the Cuckoo comes	11
My Little Young Thing	13
Why so very Jealous grown?	15
The Drought	17
The Missing Star	18
Welcome to the May	19
A Song in Sunshine	21
A Maytime Wish	22
Bonnie Maggie Ilton	25
The Bracken is springing	27
Kezzie	28
The Whistling Milkman	30
A Spring Ditty	32
When I went courting Nanny	33
The Old Well	35
My pretty little Cottage in the West Countree	37
The Holiday of Spring	39

Page

A Cot at Weargifford and Janie for me . . . 42
To the Seagull 44
England's Work and her Prospects 45
Epitaph 47
The Two Wooers 47
Our Path was where the Willows bloom . . . 49
Just like Life 51
My Song 53
Love's Long Day 54
My Little Love 55
A Thanksgiving Song 57
What is Duty? 58
My Retreat 61
The Heavens declare His Glory 62
Holbeck Flowers 63
Where and When? 65
The Sketch 67
More happy than a King 68
Wooed and Won 70
To Music 72
The Sunny Slopes of Oldiscleave 73
Work and Labour 75
Merry Labour 78
Ela 79
The Robins' Chorus 80
To a Goldfinch 81
The Secret 83
Little Mattie 84
Jack's Return 87
The Cottage Matron 88
The Old Parish Clerk 90
Cornish Bards 91
Song of the Devonian 94
The Banks of the Dart 96
The "Hobby" Clovelly 97

Page

To Bideford, in Prospect of leaving it 101
St. Mary's Bells, Bideford 104
The Torridge 105
One of the Olden Time 108
Land's End 111
Steady, old Lass! 113
The Vine 115
The Poet 118

Willow Leaves.

The Robin is weeping 123
A Song in Sorrow 125
Dead! 127
Under the Snow 131
By her Grave 132
Faith 134
Disconsolate 135
Consolation 137
Our Destiny 138
Milly 140
In the Valley of the Shadow of Death 145
Silent 146
Who now will sing my Songs to me? 148
Under the Cloud 150
Lost! Lost! 153
The Two Minstrels 156
The Vision 158
My Guardian Angel 160
The Robin 162
The Anniversary 164
The Vow 166
The Voice from the Cloud 168
Ellie Dale 173

SONNETS.

	Page
To W. C. Bennett	177
Faith	178
Hope	179
Meekness	180
Truth	181
Innocence	182
Grief	183
Patience	184
Resignation	185
Written in London	186
Non-recognition	187
Ephemera	188
To the Torridge	189
Earth	190
Heaven	191

LEGENDS.

The Legend of the Logan	195
Elena	198
Jemmo's Curse	201
The "Yeth" Hounds	204

WAYSIDE WARBLES.

"Hark to Nature's lesson given
By the blessed birds of heaven!
Every bush and tufted tree
Warbles sweet philosophy."

HEBER.

DEDICATION.

TO WILLIAM FREDERICK ROCK, ESQ.

TO thee, the foster-father of my lays,
Who found me warbling in my tuneful nook,
And proffer'd both thy friendship and thy praise,
In Love's sweet name I dedicate this book.

A homespun-thread, on which I hope to string
Some gems of Nature to a pleasant tune,
Pearls gather'd from the fragrant lap of Spring,
And rubies from the radiant hand of June.

Not mine those brilliant ornaments of song,
Which learning to the bard delights to give;

Or those rich streams of thought, clear, deep, and
strong,
Which in the lines of mightier singers live.

A gentle lover of the lane and field,
My jewels in gold meadow-buds I find,
Proud if my little rills of rhyme but yield
One sparkling drop of pleasure to my kind.

Here primrose, through the year with lamb-like
face,
And golden dimple on her modest cheek,
Will smile out with the same old saintly grace
Which made the minstrel-fathers call her *meek*.

While from the woodage running down the side
Of the steep hill, or bristling on the plain,
Some happy bird at morn and eventide
Will give, like me, his wild untutor'd strain.

And here the echo of the peasant's joy
Will carol out in many a rustic note,
And Sorrow, with her pale-faced orphan boy,
Sob her deep anguish with a grief-choked throat.

True to my instincts, both in woe and mirth,
I've follow'd Nature, learning her sweet art,
Finding more sweets than bitters on the earth,
And made the fancy handmaid of the heart.

THE POET'S DUTY.

WHEN God is talking to thy soul,
Bard, let thy tongue speak out:
No matter what the cry may be,
For peace or battle-shout.

Then shall thy words, as living fire,
Flash on the souls of men:
And Wisdom's children everywhere
Shall hail thy faithful pen.

Is there a wrong thy spirit feels?
Drink deep into its woe:
Then boldly ask thy fellow men,
If God would have it so?

And though they curl the lip in scorn,
  And darken into frown;
Or lift the hand to smite thee—yet,
  Down with the evil, down!

A prophet of the Lord art thou,
  To teach His righteous will;
To stand before the tyrant's sword,
  And shield the weak from ill.

Up, then! and do thy Master's work,
  'Tis Heaven commands. Obey!
He mighty is who hath a God
  To teach him what to say.

MY EXCUSE.

THEY ask'd me for a dulcet strain,
To suit the ruling fashion;
I told them that I could not sing
Without my native passion.
I love the wild and pathless wood,
Tree, flower, and tangled bramble:
My muse disdains the beaten track,
When she essays to ramble.

Let me but share dear Nature's force,
That impulse, song-compelling,
Found in the cottage of the poor,
As well as princely dwelling.
Then Hope exultant spreads her wing,
Near Reverence lowly kneeling:
And Joy comes smiling like the Spring,
With an ecstatic feeling.

With it my lips begin to dance,
My blood begins to tingle:

Without it all is vapid rhyme,
And empty, idle jingle.
With it the soul informs the verse,
And moves me to devotion:
Without it every stanza lacks
The life of an emotion.

Then will I sing my own true note,
And wait the inspiration
Which gives out to the listening world
The echo of creation.
When Summer to her own sweet tune
Goes dancing down the valley,
And lusty Autumn sings her song
In every leafy alley.

The lonely bird, that wakes the night
Down in the dingle-bushes,
Ne'er imitates the skylark's note,
Nor warble of the thrushes.
The linnets, too, have their own song,
The happy little darlings!
And next the oratorio
Loud chaunted by the starlings:

The storm-cock braves the wintry blast,
In his bold lay delighting,
And sings, like me, the loudest oft,
When winds are cold and biting.
Each has its own delicious way
In trilling Nature's praises;
And I have mine, which sweetest sounds
Among my native daisies.

A WARBLE.

THE balm-breathing hawthorn is blowing again,
The rocks by the roadside are yellow with broom,
The lilac is sweet with the fresh summer rain,
And the peasant's white cottage is rosy with bloom.

The red-blossom'd orchards, in beauty array'd,
Are rich with the promise of fruit to the eye,

And down in the meadow there carols a maid,
As blithe as the gay little bird of the sky.

The farmer leans over the old-fashion'd stile,
And gives out a pleasanter word as I pass;
Beef, butter, and barley, his musings beguile,
As he watches his cattle knee-deep in the grass.

The woodruff hath lit up her cluster of stars,
The sweetest of wildlings, and fairest, I ween;
The campion rivals the planet of Mars,
And larches are out in their tenderest green.

The cuckoo to silence is giving a tongue,
The blackbird is playing his flute in the thorn;
The thrush leads the air in the full-chorus'd song,
And the post blows a merrier blast on his horn.

The palmated chesnut is rearing its spikes
Of pink-spotted blossoms in park and in lawn,
And daisies are painting the slopes of the dykes,
And young lambs are leaping as light as the fawn.

The little ones group in the sunniest way,
With health on their faces as bright as their
flowers;
The dog-rose is flaunting aloft in the spray,
And bees tune their harps in the sycamore bowers.

The brooks sing a happier note as they run,
The hills in their delicate verdure are drest;
But yet there's a shadow that darkens my sun,
My love is away and alone in her nest.

WHEN THE CUCKOO COMES.

SONG.

H, why that falling tear?
Cheer up, my darling, cheer!
Health will call again, my dear,
When the cuckoo comes.
When windy March is gone,
With his heart as cold as stone,
In the bonny, merry moon,
When the cuckoo comes.

The streams, like polish'd glass,
Tinkle music as they pass,
To each merry milking lass,
When the cuckoo comes.
O, then to seek the glade,
And to linger in the shade,
In the bonny, merry moon,
When the cuckoo comes!

The Devon-hedges blow
With purple, gold, and snow,
And crowtoe-goblets glow,
When the cuckoo comes.
And all creation rings
With the glory-song it sings,
In the bonny, merry moon,
When the cuckoo comes.

I will tell a tale to thee
Underneath the hawthorn-tree,
Where you told your love to me,
When the cuckoo comes.
And, forgetting present pain,
We will dream the past again,
In the bonny, merry moon,
When the cuckoo comes.

MY LITTLE YOUNG THING.

SONG.

I FOUND a lamb without a fold,
A wee and sweetly young thing;
The beating hail fell sharp and cold
Upon my little young thing:
I knew I had a humble shed
To shield it from the pelter,
And so the little lamb I led
Unto its cosy shelter.
O, the little young thing,
That wee and sweetly young thing!
The wintry storm shall beat no more
Upon that little young thing.

I spied a bud upon a tree,
A wee and sweetly young thing,
As drench'd as any bud could be,
And sorely torn, the young thing.

I ask'd, who was the truest friend—
The one who left the blossom,
Or I, whom its sad fate had pain'd,
Who pluck'd it for my bosom?
O, the little young thing,
That wee and sweetly young thing!
The drowning rain no more shall fall
Upon that little young thing.

I saw a little bonny bird,
A wee and sweetly young thing,
Just when the wind was loudest heard,
And nestless was the young thing.
I took it to my ingle-side,
And fed it with each dainty,
But soon my little birdie died,
And left the land of plenty.
O, the little young thing,
That wee and sweetly young thing!
The wintry wind shall blow no more
Upon my little young thing.

They bore a coffin on the road,
A coffin with a young thing;

And oh ! my heart had such a load
  Of sorrow for that young thing.
They laid her in the quiet grave,
  All on a downy pillow,
Where Love in tears delights to wave
  A branch of weeping willow.
    O, my little young thing,
    My wee and sweetly young thing !
    I would that I were in my grave,
    A-nestling with my young thing !

WHY SO VERY JEALOUS GROWN ?

HY so very jealous grown ?
Tell me, darling, tell me, why ?
What ! a pout, and no reply ?
She was charming, I must own,
But whoe'er a daisy chose
In the presence of a rose ?

True, I sang the maid a song,
Praised the beauty of her cheek—

Said her locks were very sleek :
Tell me, sweetest, was I wrong ?
When the sun is not in sight
Little stars will show their light.

Know the bee, that haunts thy bower,
Making all its silence ring
With the music of his wing,
Oft will leave a favourite flower,
And a distant journey make,
Kissing others for its sake.

So I heard an insect say,
As I listen'd to his tale,
When the little lily pale
Chided him one summer-day.
Thus you will perceive, my fair,
That my conduct is not rare.

Who would listen to a wren,
When the mavis tunes his pipe ?
When the bloomy grape is ripe,
Do we eat the damson then ?
And the village maid in green,
What is she beside the Queen ?

Answer me in this, I pray,
Which is fairest, March or June?
Which is brightest, morn or noon?
Is September sweet as May?
She was water, thou art wine,
She was human, thou divine.

THE DROUGHT.

SONG.

MY heart was like the drowthy ground
Beneath a burning summer sky,
Where not a blade or drop was found
To cheer the weary traveller's eye:
But with thy sweetly loving words,
Descending like the gentle rain,
Came second spring, with songs of birds,
And all was bright and green again.

Believe me there's no drought, my dear,
Like that which nips Affection's shoot,
Which makes too soon the green leaf sere,
And robs us of our sweetest fruit:

When hate meets hate, and souls once knit
Together by the holiest ties,
Apart in sullen silence sit,
Till Hope himself despairing dies.

Then let us live those early days,
When Love was passion, heart, and soul,
When Life was one sweet song of praise,
And Gentleness e'er held control.
Say they were times of folly—true!
But since our wise ones bring us pain,
Let's, dearest, without more ado,
Live o'er our foolish hours again.

THE MISSING STAR.

VENUS! for the sake of Love,
Stay awhile thy silver car!
Have you, from your sphere above,
Lost a little dazzling star?
If you have, then I divine
Here the missing light doth shine.

Venus, credit me you may,
We the wanderer have found,
An incarnate melody,
Breathing a celestial sound:
'Tis not madness—I am sane,
And we call the stranger "Jane."

WELCOME TO THE MAY.

SONG.

OME, my dark-eyed darling,
Let us hie away,
Where the birds are singing
Welcome to the May.
How the Prince's feathers
Sweeten every breeze,
Lilac-scented Littleham
Telleth with its trees.

Skipping o'er the cornfields,
Dancing in the grove,
Trilling in the meadows
Merry lays o' love;

With a woven fillet
Made of hawthorn bloom,
Trimm'd with daisy-buttons
And a chesnut plume.

Bursting like a June-rose,
Smiling like a bride,
Sparkling as the sunlight
On a summer tide,
Blushing like the morning
At the peep o' day,
Kirtled all in green, O!
Comes the maiden May.

Nymph of love and beauty,
Whither hast thou been?
We were weary waiting*
For thee, bonny queen,
We have had no cuckoo,
We have had no showers,
Welcome, lady, welcome!
With thy rain of flowers.

* This poem was written several years since, when the spring was so late that we scarcely got a gleam of sunshine till the end of April.

A SONG IN SUNSHINE.

SONG.

SING away, ye joyous birds,
While the sun is o'er us!
If I only knew your words,
I would swell the chorus.
Sing, ye warblers of the sky!
Sing, ye happy thrushes!
And ye little ones, that lie
Down among the rushes!

Softly as an angel's wing
Comes an inspiration:
O that my poor soul could sing
Worthy of creation!
Like the solemn chaunting tree—
Nature in devotion:
Like the merry harping bee,—
Harmony in motion.

I would sound a note of joy,
Through the vales o' Devon,

Sweet as Love's, when he a boy
Newly came from heaven.
Till the busy world beguiled
With its echoes' ringing,
Shouted, " Hark! for Nature's child
Her own song is singing."

A MAYTIME WISH.

I WOULD the world could see thee as I
behold thee, May,
With eyes like sapphires gleaming
through the orchards by the way,
With the campion and the crowfoot on thy daisy-
jewell'd vest,
And a wreath of apple blossoms dropping down
upon thy breast.

I would all eyes could see thee as I behold thee
now,
With the woodruff and the bluebell, and the lily on
thy brow;

With thy kirtle richly purfled with the gorse's
golden boss,
And the orchis and the violet, the primrose and
the moss.

I would all ears could listen to thy merry-making,
May,
Could listen as I listen to thy happy roundelay;
Then a louder song would greet us from thy
orchestra of leaves,
For fewer birds would break their hearts because of
little thieves.

A form of life and beauty, I see thee, lovely May,
Breathing balm upon the meadows from each sweetly
scented spray;
From the lilac and the hawthorn, and the furze
upon the down,
And the wall-flower by the wayside in its dress of
cottage-brown.

Would you see her as I see her, you must be where
I have been,
Where the oak-tree, and the elm-tree, and the
beechen tree are seen;

Where the bright and silvery poplars in their leafy
beauty shine,
And the bees are quaffing deeply from their chalices
of wine.

You must linger, as I linger, in the shadow of each
nook,
You must listen, as I listen, to the prattle of the
brook;
You must woo her, as I woo her, with a bosom full
of love,
And the maid will stand before you like a vision
from above.

BONNIE MAGGIE ILTON.

SONG.

BONNIE MAGGIE ILTON, wi' the dark grey ee,
Bonnie Maggie Ilton made a happy slave o' me!
Bound me wi' the sweetest and tenderest o' ties,
Saft and silvery glances from bonnie Maggie's eyes.
I'd nae thought o' wooing till by chance I met,
Bonnie Maggie Ilton, wi' her glossy locks o' jet,
Smiling like the sunshine upon the brow o' spring,
And to bonnie Maggie I began to sing:

O bonnie Maggie Ilton, charming Maggie Ilton,
Bonnie Maggie Ilton wi' the dark grey ee!
O bonnie Maggie Ilton, charming Maggie Ilton,
Bonnie Maggie Ilton is the merry maid for me!

"Jamie," quoth the maiden, "when you go to sea,
You, like other sailor-lads, will make a fool o' me:

Fair enow ye are ashore, but when upon the main,
O bonnie Maggie Ilton will never haunt your brain."
" Bonnie Maggie Ilton," I at once replied,
" Never truer lad than I sail'd the saucy tide;
I've a honest heart, my dear, and I've an able hand,
And both are thine to wed, my love: what more wouldst thou demand?"
O bonnie Maggie Ilton, charming Maggie Ilton,
Bonnie Maggie Ilton wi' the dark grey ee!
O bonnie Maggie Ilton, charming Maggie Ilton,
Bonnie Maggie Ilton is the merry maid for me!

Spite o' Maggie's malison, "Wherever ye may be,
A plague upon ye, Jamie, for trifling so wi' me!"
I turn'd and look'd upon the maid, her heart was in her eyes,
And love, all trembling eloquence, thus answer'd in her sighs:
" O Jamie, gallant Jamie, since ye've come courting me,
O, I will be thine own true love, and make a wife for thee!

Yes, Jamie, gallant Jamie, and the day that makes us one
Shall bring a heart more true to thee than earth is to the sun."
O bonnie Maggie Ilton, charming Maggie Ilton,
Bonnie Maggie Ilton wi' the dark grey ee!
O bonnie Maggie Ilton, charming Maggie Ilton,
Bonnie Maggie Ilton is the best o' wives to me!

THE BRACKEN IS SPRINGING.

SONG.

THE bracken is springing, my Janie, I see,
And curling its droplets all golden for thee;
The oak's budding branches with leaflets are brown,
And Nature is out in her green cottage-gown.

There's balm in the air, love, and bloom on the trees,
And warbling of woodlands, and humming of bees;

While bright are the meadows and sunny the skies,
And everywhere glory to gladden the eyes.

Yet, Janie my darling, there's something beside
The fields in their beauty, the woods in their pride,
To give me the pleasure my soul would desire,
Thy presence, dear Janie, my song to inspire.

Oh, cruel it is to imprison those charms,
That rose on thy cheek, and that bud in thy arms;
Come out in the sunlight, here roses should blow,
And give me the Eden I covet below.

KEZZIE.

SONG.

'TIS the maid of Weargifford, fair Kezzie, I spy,
Where the banks of the Torridge are seen in their pride;
With her cheek in her palm, and a tear in each eye,
She wails her low dirge to the pitiless tide.

" O treacherous waters, how cruel," cries she,
" To rob his dear Kezzie so soon of his love;
Now sad and lone hearted I ever must be,
And mourn my lost mate like the widowèd dove.

" 'Twas here that he praised my bright auburn hair,
Compared each gold tress to the locks of the morn;
And swore by my eyes that my face was as fair
As the blossom that grew on the May-scented thorn.

" Flow softly, ye waters, where Robbie is lying,
Press gently the lid on his bonny blue eye,
Say Kezzie's sole thought is the pleasure of dying,
To meet her dear Robbie again in the sky."

THE WHISTLING MILKMAN.

WITH his weather-worn hat, and a jacket
to match,
And breeches of old corduroy,
You may see him at dawn, as he whistles his snatch,
With the smile of a merry-eyed boy.

For thirty long summers his yoke he has borne,
With scarcely the sign of a stoop;
His milkcans, as bright as the face of the morn,
Making love to a lily-white hoop.

Though bound by that fetter, yet still he is free
As the lark that sings over his head;
And none are more welcome I trow, lads, than he
To Mary, the housekeeping maid.

She hears Dicky's whistle, and dropping her brush,
She scampers away to the door,

With "Dicky, my darling, I thought 'twas a thrush
A-whistling of 'Rory o' More.'"

"Indeed," he replies, as he hands her her milk,
"Do you know, were it not for your nose,
And your locks, my dear Mary, as glossy as silk,
I should take you, my love, for a rose?"

Then tramping away to his merriest tune,
He calls at a neighbour's, to find
Sweet Betsy as red as a rose-bud in June,
With a heart most uncommonly kind.

'Tis thus he is bother'd from year unto year,
And a hundred such sweethearts hath he,
So to all he says, "Wait till next summer, my dear,
And I'll buy a 'new nothing' for thee."

A SPRING DITTY.

SONG.

HARK! the missel-thrush is singing,
Singing on the tree;
All around his notes are ringing,
Ringing merrily.
Sitting in the spray above,
Thus he warbles to his love,
"Cheer, my darling birdie, cheer!
Joy and thy true love are near."

Now a wand'ring bard is trilling,
Trilling out his song,
Heaven's high vault with music filling,
As he trips along.
Happy as the bird is he,
As he carols cheerily,
"Love's own joy is in thy strain,
Sing, my bonny bird, again."

WHEN I WENT COURTING NANNY.

SONG.

MY Nanny O! my Nanny O!
When I went courting Nanny,
'Twas in the spring,
The merry spring,
When linnets in love began to sing,
That I went courting Nanny.

My Nanny O! my Nanny O!
When I went courting Nanny,
I fear'd no care,
Nor loving snare,
Though mother said at times, "Beware!"
When I went courting Nanny.

My Nanny O! my Nanny O!
Went I went courting Nanny,
'Twas naught but shine,
And dreams divine,
Life's river ran like rosy wine,
When I went courting Nanny.

My Nanny O! my Nanny O!
When I went courting Nanny,
I said, "Your eyes
Are summer skies,
Your lips the only fruit I prize,"
When I went courting Nanny.

My Nanny O! my Nanny O!
Since I went courting Nanny,
I've learnt old care,
Kept cupboards bare,
And found both love and money rare,
Since I went courting Nanny.

My Nanny O! my Nanny O!
Yet if I had my Nanny,
I'd laugh at care
And cupboards bare,
And make the foulest day look fair,
O that I had my Nanny!

THE OLD WELL.

SONG.

KNOW an old well in a daffodil nook,
Where gossiping finches are seen,
Near a rill running down to a water-cress brook,
In a channel of russet and green.

The summer frog "quilks" in the cool of its shade,
The hart's-tongue curls under its crown;
And willow-weeds fresh and unwilling to fade,
On its moss-cover'd margin look down.

'Twas there I first met with a Devonshire maid,
On a midsummer-morn when a boy,
With a wreath of forget-me-nots circling her head,
And I gave her a heart in my joy.

A red earthen water-pot stood by her side,
Which she winningly press'd me to dip;

I ask'd, What's the fee? And she quaintly replied
With a sweet cherry pout of her lip.

When I pass the dear spot and I see the blue eyes
Of those old-fashion'd tokens of love,
I fancy them angel-wrought gems of the skies,
Dropp'd down by my darling above.

O, that ivy-capp'd well in that daffodil nook
No hand of the spoiler shall harm,
While I as a solitaire dwell by the brook,
The spell-loving slave of its charm!

MY PRETTY LITTLE COTTAGE IN THE WEST COUNTREE.

SONG.

THERE are many happy homes, in this happy little isle,
Where happy children prattle, and happy mothers smile;
But of all those happy homes, there is none so dear to me
As a pretty little cottage in the West Countree.

There the honeysuckle twines, and the bird sings in the bough,
And the sweet milk flows in streams from the dainty Devon cow,
And the brooklet sings its ditty as it dances to the sea—
O that pretty little cottage in the West Countree!

There a happy little woman in that happy little home
Is singing to her little ones the song of "Dadda, come!

O the happy, happy day when he returns to see
His pretty cottage blossoms in the West Countree."

Methinks I see her now with her sparkling eyes o' fire,
And hands that never weary, and feet that never tire,
Embracing my fond treasures and kissing them for me,
In my pretty little cottage in the West Countree.

I fain would tarry with you, but the hour is drawing nigh
When the breast shall throb with sadness as the lips shall say "Good-bye,"
But however fortune varies, or wherever you may be,
I will feast upon your kindness in the West Countree.

Then join with me in singing, ere we part perhaps for aye,
Though the cheeks be wet with weeping, yet the heart should still be gay,
And the tears that dim the vision shall brighter make my "ee,"
In my pretty little cottage in the West Countree.

THE HOLIDAY OF SPRING.

I love to saunter out
Where lusty throstles shout,
And list the happy twitter
Of the sparrows in the eaves,
And watch the orb of day
Chase the lingering clouds away,
And mark the sunbeams smiling
Through the young green of the leaves.

When that dandy little bird
In the yellow vest is heard
Running down its native gamut,
In the golden spangled glade;
And the little fussy wren,
Chirping gaily in the glen,
Hops rustling through the herbage
In the primrose dappled shade.

When the pinky tassel'd larch,
With its fairy buds of March,
Throws the spruce-fir into shadow,
And the Caledonian pine,
When that queen of all her race
Trails her flowing robes of grace,
Which the Master's hand hath tinted
With a lustre most divine.

And minstrels of the air,
Making merry everywhere,
Sing glory, glory, glory,
As they mount upon the breeze:
And rooks caw out their loves
As tenderly as doves,
In all the joy of indolence,
On old baronial trees.

When a brightly glowing gleam
Of sunshine on the stream,
Turns each wavelet into silver
In its journey to the main;

When the zenith is so blue,
That the heavens look down to view
The image of their beauty
In the mirror of the plain.

O delicious is the bliss
Of the morning's early kiss,
As the zephyrs flit about me
On their ever-busy wing;
When the orchis glows with pride,
And the violet as his bride
Invites me to her banquet
In the holiday of Spring.

A COT AT WEARGIFFORD AND JANIE FOR ME.

SONG.

SIGH not for honour, I covet not station,
A man may be noble, though lowly his birth,
The world 's my domain, and my home is creation,
And proud as a monarch I traverse the earth.
Yet still there's a wish in my bosom I cherish,
I long for a spot where the soul may be free;
A fig for ambition, and gold let it perish,
A cot at Weargifford and Janie for me.

Sweet vale of green Devon, wood-shelter'd and cosy,
How blest are thy maidens, and happy thy men!
Thy little ones all, like thy gardens, are rosy,
Thy orchards are fruitful, and fertile thy plain!

Long, long may thy hall throw its shade on the river,
The beautiful Tor winding up from the sea—
Thy woods, herds, and flocks, and thy sunsets for ever,
A cot at Weargifford and Janie for me.

And O, the sweet bees and their hives full of honey!
And O, the gay warblers that pipe there in spring!
And O, the fair banks and their blossoms so bonny,
And the sweet village bells with their ding-a-dong-ding!
I hate to be bound by the fetters of fashion,
The town hath its chains for the soul that is free;
My love for dear Nature was ever a passion,
A cot at Weargifford and Janie for me.

TO THE SEAGULL.

I HAVE seen thee, fairy sea-bird, come
sailing from afar,
And gleam out in the welkin like the
shooting of a star,
Next, dropping in a shallow, dot the wave with silver-
white,
Then hover a fair beauty o'er thy dainty shade of
light.

ENGLAND'S WORK AND HER PROSPECTS.

UP, up, ye sons of Britain, and put forth your mighty power,
'Tis yours to give the impress to the future page of time,
'Tis yours to give the purpose to each ever-changing hour,
And write the wide world's history in characters sublime.

We have a host of hero-hearts in harness for the strife,
A noble band—a glorious band—and many thousands strong,
Who labour without ceasing, in the great highways of life,
To bring the coming glory in with trumpet, shout, and song.

O call it not Utopian, or a poet's idle dream,
Behold, like torrents tumbling down a broken
mountain's side,
It is coming on us flashing with a vivid lightning
gleam,
And its rivers, big with energy, are running deep
and wide.

In the city, by the hamlet, through the village and
the town,
It flows in strength and beauty, bearing health
upon its breast,
And the pallid sons of penury, who once were
trodden down,
Sing, "The Lord's good time is coming for the
needy and oppressed."

EPITAPH.

FOR my love I built a nest,
With two birdies we were blest;
Raven-death this way did fly,
Slew them both, and here they lie.

THE TWO WOOERS.

SONG.

CAME an old man wooing,
Wooing in the May,
Wild his locks were flowing,
White as winter's day:
" Maiden o' the red cheek,
Thy fair hand I crave,
Be an old man's darling,
Not a young man's slave."

Spake the lovely maiden,
" Do the birds o' spring
Wait until the winter
Ere o' love they sing?
Youth's the time for wooing,
Youth's the time to wed,
Age should think of going
Down among the dead."

Came a young man wooing,
Wooing in the May,
Bright his eyes were glowing
Like a summer day:
" Maiden o' the red cheek,
If thy hand is free,
Mine is thine to labour
Ever, love, for thee.

Spake the maiden blushing,
Eyes towards the ground,
" Love in life's young season
Oft is empty sound."

" Nay, sweet creature, prove me,"
Quoth the gentle swain:
Smiled the maiden on him,
Wedded were the twain.

OUR PATH WAS WHERE THE WILLOWS BLOOM.

SONG.

UR path was where the willows bloom
And daffodils are seen,
Where catkins dally with the wind,
Before the sloe is green;
Where primroses on mossy banks
With fragrant voices speak,
And violets wear their virgin blush
Upon their purple cheek.

I told her while the year was young
The youthful heart should love,
And pointed at a little lark
That twinkled far above;

Then where a limpid streamlet breathed
  Its soft and soothing hush,
I ask'd her why those happy birds
  Were playing in the bush.

She turn'd the sweetest glance on me—
  " O trifle not," she cried;
" O who would ever lonely be,
  Like that complaining tide!
Speak out the secrets of thy heart,
  Perchance they chime with mine,
And, like the little loving bird,
  Will warble, ' I am thine!' "

JUST LIKE LIFE.

IT chanc'd upon a pleasant day,
When heaven and earth were shining,
A lark pursued its upward way,
And left the world repining.

"Why is it," squeak'd a peevish mole,
Beside a silver runnel,
"That I, a poor laborious soul,
Am doom'd this earth to tunnel?

"While that ambitious thing above,
His golden way is wending,
And, trilling out his song of love,
Is evermore ascending?

"Or idling by the moor is found,
Or playing in the heather,
Or, nestling on the mossy ground,
He trims each ruffled feather?

" 'Tis very hard that one must dig
And delve so for a living,
And see him for a song and jig
Both love and fame receiving."

" 'Tis very true," croak'd out a toad,
Behind a patch of daisies;
" He sings and dances up his road
Amid a shower of praises.

" But you, sir, with your velvet coat,
Should not be found complaining."
" Right, Mister Toad," chimed in a stoat,
A little friendship feigning;

" Still he who digs and he who sings
May surely love each other;
But he who has a skylark's wings
Must soar above his brother."

MY SONG.

SONG.

WHEN the lusty Spring appears,
All mirth and melody,
I shout, "This is no time for tears,
Whate'er my woe may be;"
And when the Summer trips with grace
Across the fields of June,
I strive to wear a brighter face,
And pipe a gayer tune.
Thus year by year I sing, you see,
Light-hearted as a boy;
The wheels of life move heavily
Without the oil of joy.

Then Autumn comes with harvest-time,
The tribute of the year,
And Winter rings its Christmas chime
Of fellowship and cheer.

Yet whatsoe'er the change may be,
I keep my heart as green
As when I whisper'd tenderly
My love to blushing "Jean."
Thus year by year I sing, you see,
Light-hearted as a boy;
The wheels of life move heavily
Without the oil of joy.

LOVE'S LONG DAY.

SONG.

THE red sun has thrown off his misty white shroud, love,
And spurns the black night like a spirit the tomb,
And golden atop the grey easternmost cloud, love,
His pathway is mark'd by a beautiful "strome."
Why tarriest thou in the cool of the morning,
My hope, my belovéd, my bosom's delight?
Haste, haste, my sweet charmer of Nature's adorning,
Nor linger, I pray, till the red sun is white.

The white sun is up in the high noon careering,
O maid of the dark eye, my heart yearns for thee!
The red sun of even is fast disappearing,
Oh, why is thy smiling face hidden from me?
The fair star of eve which thou lovest is shining,
And pensively waits for the light of thine eye;
The moon for thy presence, my Janie, is pining,—
Oh, why dost thou tarry, belovéd, oh, why?

MY LITTLE LOVE.

I HAVE a love at Aston Hall,
A little prattling darling,
She's very, very, very small,
And chatters like a starling:
Her hair is light, her eye blue bright,
Her cheek is like a posy,
And if you wish her name outright,
'Tis little Baby Rosy.

She's such a sweet, wee, winsome thing,
That, spite of my endeavour
To give the witch the cruel fling,
I fear that I must have her:
She comes and peers into my eyes,
And climbs up o'er my shoulder,
Or snares me by some fond surprise,
Till I am forc'd to hold her.

And then she pulls me by the beard,
Or clutches at my glasses,
Till I begin to be afear'd
She'll beat my Devon lasses.
God keep her little loving heart;
I wish her well and cosy,
And may no evil bring a smart
To my sweet Baby Rosy.

A THANKSGIVING SONG.

ARISE, and lift the voice
In grateful harmony,
In God the Lord let us rejoice,
For great and good is He.
He saw us in our need,
And heard our earnest cry,
And on the newly-scatter'd seed
Dropt fatness from on high.
Lo! on the barren plain
A glow of life is seen,
Where, cherish'd by the sun and rain,
Upshoots the tender green.
Now in a gleaming sea
The heavy wheat-ears nod,
As balmy winds skim sportively
The golden hills of God.
Those pledges of His good,
Those tokens of His care,

We now in all their plenitude
Of heavenly blessings share.
The music of the wains,
Returning from the field,
Is rich with loud thanksgiving strains
For earth's most bounteous yield.
Then let us lift the voice
In sacred harmony,
In God the Lord we will rejoice,
For great and good is He.

Aug. 18, 1863.

WHAT IS DUTY?

'TIS not by dreaming and delay,
But doing something every day,
That wins the laurel and the bay,
And crowns the work of duty.

Be satisfied that thou art right,
And that thy deed will bear the light,
Then execute it with thy might,
For that will be thy duty.

There is a true sublimity
In every work of God we see,
And this is what it teacheth thee,
  Arise, and do thy duty!

It may be like the lowly flower
Which grows in silence, hour by hour,
Thou art to manifest thy power,
  And do thy humble duty.

Or, like the grandly solemn trees
Which thunder like the booming seas
In tempest,—thou must, spurning ease,
  Perform the work of duty.

Or, like the cataract that leaps
From crag to crag, and never sleeps,
You may descend life's rugged steeps,
  And find the path of duty.

In passive or in active life,
In peace or in tumultuous strife,
To father, mother, friend, and wife,
  Be constant in thy duty.

In Nature's boundless universe
Thou wilt not see that dreadful curse,
An atom to its work averse,
An idler shirking duty.

The planets as they roll on high,
The river as it rusheth by,
For ever and for ever cry,
"On, man, and do thy duty!"

All, all is working everywhere,
In earth, in heaven, in sea, and air,
And nothing indolent is there
To mar the perfect beauty.

MY RETREAT.

ONCE more alone with Nature, yes, alone!
And yet not lonely whilst the eye can see
A thread of silver rippling o'er a stone,
Or ear drink in the music of the bee,
A weedy pebble in the limpid brook,
A mossy tuft upon a wayside wall,
A young fern curling like a bishop's crook,
A spleenwort sprouting from a ruin'd hall,
The pennywort close clinging to the rock,
The tiniest wildling, and the simplest flower,
The footpath with its shepherd's purse and clock,
And lichen gilding o'er an old church tower,—
All yield a charm unknown when with my kind,
A pleasant feeling near akin to bliss,
A calm enjoyment which pervades the mind,
And, once experienced, pains the soul to miss.
Sing on, ye birds, and you, ye streamlets, run!
Breathe gently, O ye winds, and low, ye kine!
Bleat, my loved flocks, and roll, O glorious sun!
And the sweet work of worship shall be mine.

THE HEAVENS DECLARE HIS GLORY.

THE faithless ask for miracles,
The fool requires a sign,
When God is ever manifest
In wonders most divine.

I see Him girt about with storms,
His chariot is the wind,
His pathway is the universe,
Profound and unconfined.

He binds the earth with iron bands,
And chains it to the sun;
He rolls the stars into the heavens,
And evermore they run.

The lightnings blaze along His path,
And turn the night to day,
As in His cloudy car of wrath
He thunders on His way.

'Tis He appoints the thirsty hill
To drink the falling shower,
And bids the river seek the vale,
The dew-drop feed the flower.

Behold Him stooping from the sky,
To paint the harvest brown;
While manna, streaming from the sun,
With every ray comes down.

HOLBECK FLOWERS.

YONDER she dwells beside the kirk,
Amid the suffocating mirk,
Where not a patch of grass is green,
Save that upon the graveyard seen.

I cannot praise her rosy cheek,
For sooth within her ringlets sleek
No tint of the queen-flower remains
To speak of breezy hills and plains.

A pale-faced lily of the street
Is the dear lassie honey-sweet;
With all the floweret's lowly grace
And pensive look about her face.

I talk'd to her of fields and stiles,
She lit up like a sea of smiles;
For, thinking of her native bowers,
And ankle-deep amid her flowers:

Sweet old familiar notes she heard,
The warblings of her woodland-bird,
And, heedless of the factory din,
Paced once more by her merry lynn.

As guileless as a daisy, she
Stood lost in silent reverie;
When, lo! her tears came welling up
Like bubbles in a crystal cup.

Then sweetly she began to sing,
"O how I love the bonny spring!"
And dreaming of her father's cot,
She conjured up its bloomy knot.

" Have you a garden plot?" said I;
When thus the lassie made reply,
" I'd like some flowers, but dare-na see
Them stifled by the mirk and dee."

WHERE AND WHEN?

SONG, DUET.

WHERE wilt thou nestle, my Janie?
Where wilt thou nestle, my Jane?
Near the bank of some warbling river,
Where willow-herb reddens the lane?
Where, love, where?
Where wilt thou nestle, my Janie?
Where, love, where?"
" Where will I nestle, my Jamie?
Where will I nestle, love, where?
On the Taw, where the meadowsweet, Jamie,
Scenteth the hot summer air!
There, love, there!
There will I nestle, my Jamie,
There, love, there!"

" When wilt thou marry me, Janie ?
When wilt thou marry me, Jane ?
Why thus so cruelly pain me,
Making sweet loving a bane ?
When wilt thou marry me, Janie ?
When, love, when ?"
" When will I marry thee, Jamie ?
When will I marry thee, when ?
When the goldfinches are wooing,
And ringdoves build down in the glen,
Then, love, then,
Then will I marry thee, Jamie,
Then, love, then !"

THE SKETCH.

TO sketch a rustic cot 'twere easy,
And anyone in that may please ye;
But when a palace, rich in charms
Of sculpture and heraldic arms,
With turrets o'er the highest story,
And columns rich in classic glory,
Demands the pencil's utmost skill,
A genius must the task fulfil.
And such, Eliza, is thy grace,
And love-irradiated face,
And such the lustre of thine eye,
That 'tis in vain my pen must try
To seize thy lineaments divine,
And prison them in my poor line.
As volatile as air are they,
Now tinged with sadness, and now gay,
Now pensive as the weary moon,
Now joyous as a day in June.

Yet, dearest maiden, do not start,
I think that I have caught thy heart,
And drawn it in its kindliest mood,
For Nature says the sketch is good.

MORE HAPPY THAN A KING.

GIVE me the bright bird palaces,
Where Joy delights to dwell,
The fragrant grove of sycamore,
The odour-breathing dell.
'Tis there, with rapture in my soul,
I sit in bliss and sing,
" Good bye to care, for here I feel
More happy than a king."

Yes, I have known the ecstasy
Which comes in sunny days,
Of gazing on the silent heavens,
Till I was dumb with praise:

To quaff the sunshine of the skies
Till drunken with its wine,
Then, shouting, tell the listening world
The draught was most divine.

Aye! and this pleasure thou may'st share,
If thou wilt only go
Where Nature is the antidote
Of half our mortal woe.
With hearty purpose in thy soul,
Go, hear the minstrels sing,
And thou shalt feel, as I have felt,
More happy than a king.

WOOED AND WON.

HER eyes were like two radiant seas,
Which gleam beneath the summer-light,
And 'twas my joy to sit at ease,
And see them tremble with delight.

I sat and watch'd them day by day,
And dallied with her downy cheek,
I felt she knew what I would say,
But love is strong and words are weak.

I breathed my life away in sighs,
I wooed her with each winning smile,
She drank my soul in through her eyes,
And only gave a cruel smile.

I pray'd that I might touch her hand,
She granted me my fond request,
For well she knew it was a wand
To draw me closer to her breast.

And then I sought to find her ear,
Alas! 'twas hid beneath a curl,—
"What have you there," I ask'd, "my dear?
A pretty tiny shell of pearl?

But tell me why 'tis buried so,
To hide a jewel is not meet?"
"Were I that dainty thing to show,
'Twould catch too many whispers, sweet."

I told a love-tale to the maid,
I saw her lips curl round with play,
And kissing them for what they said,
I stole her wicked heart away.

TO MUSIC.

FOR some sweet, simple tune,
Like the melodies of June;
Lightsome as the wanton air,
Flitting here and everywhere;
Wild as an Æolian strain,
Let the sounding note complain,
Till my spirit, sore distrest,
Solaced, slumbers into rest.
Music, brush thy silver wings,
O'er the harp's responsive strings,
Or from out thy golden throat
Breathe the sympathetic note;
Wake again thy dulcet lute,
And the warble of the flute;
Let the violin be heard,
Like a lone lamenting bird;
Chaunt to me an olden psalm,
Till a soft, harmonious calm

Settles down upon my soul,
Sweet as soothing Love's control.
Come, O come, melodious wind,
Healer of the wounded mind,
Like a ripple on the shore,
When the sea forgets to roar;
Like the organ's gentle swells,
Or the mellow sound of bells
Murmuring in an ancient shrine,
Break, O Melody divine.

THE
SUNNY SLOPES OF OLDISCLEAVE.

THE sunny slopes of Oldiscleave!
No woods are half so bonny, O,
'Twas there upon an April-eve
I wander'd with my Janie, O!
The sky came winking through the trees,
The sun came glinting golden, O,
And many a passing tell-tale breeze,
Flew by and caught us courting, O.

The white owl sat with folded wing,
And laugh'd his wicked whoo-o-o;
And every bird essay'd to sing
The first note of his roundel, O!
While on the sands a silvery row
Of seagulls talk'd of loving, O,
Or, like a thousand flakes of snow,
Danced high up in the ether, O.

My Janie has a witching eye,
So black and bright with lustre, O,
That night has often with a sigh
Wish'd 'twere a star in heaven, O;
And such a cheek and rosy mouth—
In honey-wine we'll pledge them, O—
That bees have from the flowery south
Come oft to sip their nectar, O.

And Janie has a loving heart,
So closely knit to mine, I trow,
That death has often strove to part
The twain, but ne'er succeeded, O.

The sunny slopes of Oldiscleave,
No woods are half so bonny, O,
'Tis there on every pleasant eve
I'd wander with my Janie, O!

WORK AND LABOUR.

MURMUR not, my fellow-worker,
To thy sentence meekly bow;
'Twas not all in anger spoken,
"By the sweating of thy brow
Thou shalt earn thy daily morsel,
'Mid the thistle and the thorn:"
Joy comes not unto the idle,
Wretchedness from sloth is born;
All the wise are busy workers,
Work is the best cure for strife,
And our dying is but working
Upward to the perfect life.
Hark, Creation groans with labour,
Bidding earth's huge pillars shake,

Where the burning heart of Etna
Makes its iron mountain quake!
Know the roaring of the thunder
Is the lightning's labour fret,
And the heavy dewy morning
Is old Nature in a sweat.
Have you watch'd the modest brooklet
Gliding by its bank of green,
Like an unpretentious virtue
By its quiet action seen?
Mark'd the river in the valley
Ploughing out its graceful course,
As it travell'd in its beauty,
With its own sweet gentle force?
And the torrent fiercely raging
In its fury down the glen,
Wrestling with the rocks, and swirling
Down into its hollow den?
Work and labour is their mission,
And a lovely harmony
Rill, and cataract, and river,
Make with bird and honey-bee.
But for labour not a blossom
E'er would fill us with delight;

But for work no luscious wine-fruit
E'er would burst upon our sight.
Beauty is the crown of labour,
Comfort is its golden wage,
And the toiling youth shall gather
Blessings for his silver age.
Work, the universe is working,
Ocean pants with every wave;
Stars are heaven's fleet steeds in harness,
And the sun is but a slave.
Work, for God the Lord is working
In the mystic infinite,
Rolling from His throne of glory
Seas of love, in life and light.

MERRY LABOUR.

SONG.

HARK! merry Labour is singing his song,
Singing his song with its tira la le!
Blithesome as summer he carols along,
Show me a monarch as happy as he!

Red are his cheeks, and round as the sun,
Bright his blue eyes with beauty and glee;
Love is the string that he playeth upon,
And never a care beside hath he.

Joy to the peasant! his pride is his team,
Hark how he whistles aloud on the lea!
Straight as an arrow he plougheth his seam,
And no man sleepeth sounder than he.

Talk not to him of the king on his throne,
Where the bird warbles aloft on the tree:
There Merry Labour is toiling alone,
Singing his song with its tira la le.

ELA.

SONG.

THE weary sun sank down to rest
Behind the lonely sea,
Like guinea gold shone out the west
To my true love and me.

The silent night enwrapt the globe
In deep and solemn gloom,
And when departing trail'd her robe
Across my Ela's room.

The young dawn led the blushing morn
Forth from his amber gate,
The merle piped on his mellow horn
Beside his gentle mate.

The sun is in his highest noon,
My Ela, where is she?
Cold, dead! and paler than the moon
Upon a winter sea.

THE ROBINS' CHORUS.

SAY, my little robins,
Singing on the bough,
Heralding the Autumn
With her yellow brow,
Why the woods are vocal
With your merry lays,
While our summer songsters
Sleep away their days?

Lovingly I linger'd,
Listening to their tale,
When a gush of music
Answer'd through the vale;
Every hedge was vocal,
Every tree and bush,
Singing, Little Robin
Is October's thrush.

" When the Spring and Summer
Make all nature gay,
Other minstrels warble
Through the sunny day:
'Tis their joy and pleasure,
But our office, know,
Is to carol comfort
In the hour of woe."

TO A GOLDFINCH.

IS not for thy golden wing,
Gem of the grove,
That here in an ecstasy,
Glowing with love,
I linger to listen,
Enchanted by thee;
But because of the song
Thou art giving to me.

Thou bright little elf
With the red-ruffled throat,

There's something so beautiful
Heard in thy note:
So mellow, so melting,
So tender and sweet,
That it lulls me to sleep
In this pleasant retreat.

Like a mountain-born minstrel
Of sunny Savoy,
The thrush pipes his roundel
Of freedom and joy;
That wild flying rapture,
The skylark again,
There's more of ambition
Than love in his strain:

But the call-note thy pretty tongue
Gives in the May,
For thy bonny wee wife
In the apple-tree spray,
Is such as a seraph
Might envy above,
Thy dear little melody
Made up of love.

THE SECRET.

"IN winter, with the prospect drear,
How is it you so loudly sing?
Your old familiar voice we hear
As blithesome as the thrush in spring?"

"When light brims o'er in summer days,
To some sweet sunny nook I haste,
And husband up the vagrant rays,
Nor let the sunshine run to waste.

"Thus when the stormy rack comes down,
And all around is dark as doom,
I smile at each tempestuous frown,
And fling my sunshine o'er the gloom."

LITTLE MATTIE.

IT was a calm October morn,
When robins pipe in every thorn
Like thrushes in the Spring.
And here the elm with golden crown,
And there the oak in sober brown,
Compel the lips to sing.

Sweet Nature on enjoyment bent,
The very picture of Content,
Was happy everywhere.
And all the leaves that strew'd the way,
At "round we go," were fast at play,
With a true elfin air.

I chose a pleasant road which wound
Its sinuous length along the ground,
An undulating lane—
And pass'd where red Virginians creep
Across the window-sill to peep
In at the lattice pane.

The golden pippin where it shone,
And the bright crimson'd floridon,
  Their laden branches bend;
While the pale ash-leaf lay below,—
The last to come and first to go,—
  Like many a faithless friend.

Above, a lark went soaring high,
Thinking he saw a summer's sky
  In one wee blink o' blue:
When in a shady wayside well,
Hid in the dimple of a dell,
  Two pitchers met my view.

Two tiny things by potters wrought,
For little hands to bear methought;
  " But wherefore do they lie
Thus deep beneath the limpid wave?"
I ask'd an old man looking grave,
  Whom I saw standing by.

" Ah!" he replied, and shook his head,
" 'Twas little Mattie's, pretty maid;
  But never never more

Will she come hither, laughing dear,
Her course of water hence to bear
Home to her father's door.

" With cheeks all rose and voice all song,
' Mother,' rang out her birdlike tongue,—
For she was only seven,—
I think if you will let me go,
I'll fetch you in a turn or so;'
Not dreaming then of heaven.

" ' What makes my precious darling stay,'—
The mother to her fears would say,—
' The clock's half after nine!'
Then call'd her name in shrillest tone,
And, *all ear*, listen'd there alone,
But Mattie gave no sign.

" Then speeding hither, swoon'd when she
Naught but the fatal door could see,
The well door open wide."
And thus I gather'd how they found
Poor little Mattie Burnard drown'd,
There by the coppice side.

JACK'S RETURN.

SONG.

DO you love me now, my darling,
As you loved when last we met,
When your lips with sorrow quiver'd,
And your rosy cheeks were wet?
When you shook my hand, and parted,
To linger on the plain,
And running back to kiss me,
You shook it o'er again?

I never saw you, Emily,
So beautiful as then;
The long sad lingering look you gave
Was exquisite with pain:
I treasured every silver tear
With memory's subtle art,
And bore it with me round the world,
Lock'd in my faithful heart.

I saw you by your cottage door
When we were under weigh,
And bless'd the handkerchief you waved
To cheer me in the bay.
That precious signal now I crave,
It is a sacred thing,
And I will give you in exchange
A golden wedding ring.

THE COTTAGE MATRON.

SHE has a pair of loving eyes,
A happy, smiling face,
As sunny as the summer skies
And her sweet name is Grace.

Her chief ambition's like her sire's—
A cottage in a lane,
With red-geranium-lighted fires
Behind her window pane.

Her gown which, rustling like the sedge,
Is sweeten'd with perfume,
Was dried upon her garden hedge,
When hawthorns were in bloom.

A tender-hearted soul is she
To everything that's small,
And not a bird upon the tree
But answers to her call.

And proud to clear her honest way,
She deems her home her place,
And sweet Content calls every day
To see her sister Grace.

THE OLD PARISH CLERK.

SONG.

THE old clerk lived at the sign o' the Bell,
A sturdy six foot "lord" was he,
And not a neighbour but loved him well,
For a better heart there never could be.

He laugh'd and wept, and wept and laugh'd,
Was joyous now, and now was grave;
Merry was he when ale he quaff'd,
Could tickle a fiddle or pipe a stave.

His dame was all a woman could be,
And none could fill her place so well;
His son a stalwart lad was he,
And love was warm at the sign o' the Bell.

Now cold beneath the churchyard tree,
A grave is seen among the dead,
And oft each neighbour halts to see
The spot where the dear old pair are laid.

CORNISH BARDS.*

CORNWALLIA needs no minstrel,
She sings her own great song,
Her crags are grand with eloquence,
Each cavern has a tongue.

A grey bard is St. Michael's,
And there he stands and plays,
Recounting deeds of chivalry
In long forgotten days.

Carn Brae the wildest music
Gives out in solemn tones;

* Written on being asked, when there, to sing a song on Cornwall.

Go, hear him in the tempest, brush
His harp of granite stones.

At Castle Treyn rude Nature
Discourses most sublime,
And Kynance sings: How beautiful
The earth was in her prime!

And under fair Pendarvis
Some priests, with oaken wands,
Sang psalms in sacred worship
Where the grey cromlech stands.

On lofty Carn Mennellez,
In solemn conclave met,
A white-hair'd band of Druids
Knelt on the heather wet.

And listening to a minstrel
Within the mystic ring,
The priest and all the people
A song of war did sing.

At every cross a pilgrim
Intoned a solemn prayer,
And every wayside fountain
Sang a religious air.

And thou, my love, Penjerrick,
What melody I heard
From him who bade me welcome,
Famed friend of beast and bird.

And how his life is music
Bolenowe's bard can tell,
Who sings in sweetest numbers
Of carn, and croft, and dell.

Thus every spot is vocal
With some enchanting tongue;
Cornwallia needs no minstrel,
She sings her own great song.

SONG OF THE DEVONIAN.

SONG.

HOME of the beautiful, home of the brave,
Where the bright sea-gull troops whiten the wave,
Where the bold crags in their glory appear,
Haunt of wild horses and bonny red deer.

Mother of heroes, my best song be thine,
Beauty, ineffable beauty is mine;
Ringdoves that glow with each orient hue,
And highlands enveloped in visions of blue.

Where the grey " Tor," as in ages of yore,
Mocks the mad war of the storm on the " moor,"
Bravely exposing its huge granite crest,
Or wrapt in a cloud like an angel at rest.

Where the fair orchards in beauty are seen,
Shaking their carmine bloom over the green;

And lily-white love-cots perch high on each hill,
Or nestle like swans by the river and rill.

Where the red-Devon is blowing his horn,
And crimson-lipp'd poppies are wooing the corn,
There, like an emerald sprinkled with foam,
There is the land of my love and my home.

Soft are her winds, as the breath of her kine,
Fragrant her breeze, as the odour of wine;
Rich are the roses that sweeten the air,
And richer the maidens that carry them there.

Garden of wood-cover'd grottoes, and streams,
Where the blue sky of fair Italy gleams,
Where the thrush warbles, and meadow-lark springs,
To carol his tune to the beat of his wings.

Love to thy matrons, and joy to thy sires,
Happy am I when I sit by thy fires,
Wine from the elder, and wine from the bee,
And wine from the apple, are waiting for me.

THE BANKS OF THE DART.

SONG.

SING on, for thy lay, like a ripple, is stealing
Far down to the depths of my womanly heart!
Sing on, for my soul is alive with the feeling
Which touch'd me to tears on the banks of the Dart.

More mellow than bells in the eventide chiming
Was the musical vow which he utter'd to me;
And tenderer far than a love-poet's rhyming,
The sigh which he breathed by the old willow tree.

He sang me a song overflowing with pity,
And threw its sweet meaning so into his eyes,
That when the fond minstrel had finish'd his ditty,
I found my fair bosom a prison of sighs.

Of passion he sang, and the truest devotion,
The triumphs of beauty, the pride of the brave,
Till I found my young spirit alive with emotion,
And love in a whisper declared me his slave.

Sing on, for thy lay, like a ripple, is stealing
Far down to the depths of my womanly heart;
Sing on, for my soul is alive with the feeling,
Which touch'd me to tears on the banks of the Dart.

THE "HOBBY," CLOVELLY.

THEY told me 'twas enchanted ground,
The fairies' sweetest ferny haunt;
I deem'd it but an empty sound,
A fancy, or an idle vaunt.

But when I pass'd its rustic gate,
My Muse, all buoyant, spread her wing,
And Melody, with joy elate,
In ecstasy began to sing—

Of beautiful and balmy spots,
And pathways buried in the shade;
Of sultry nooks and cooling grots,
And flowers that gem the sunny glade;

Of trees depending, till the leaves
Rest on the roadway's rocky ground,
Where hares disport at summer eves,
Ere they into the dingles bound;

Bright glimpses of the Severn sea,
Like its reflected heaven at rest,
Where Lundy in serenity
Sleeps like an island of the blest;

Of broad sea-plains of meadowy green,
And witching peeps of cove and pier,
And boats that dot the liquid scene
Of blue and purpling waters near;

Of rich oak-bosses on each height,
And rills that ripple down the glen,
Now foaming into purest white,
Now running into gloom agen;

Of deep ravines and hollow coombs,
Of foxglove banks and ferny dells,
And a fair bay which ever booms
Its music as the ocean swells;

And hawks that wildly screaming, wheel
Around each rude and savage cliff,
And sea-birds, that with downy keel
Skim o'er the billows like a skiff;

And trawlers which, like butterflies,
Flit o'er the main with tawny wing,
And barks whose topmasts pierce the skies,
And breakers ever murmuring;

And a bluff rock with thorny crown,
A shelter for the timid fawn,
And woods for ever sloping down,
As smooth to sight as shaven lawn;

A village like a waterfall,
Or torrent rushing to the tide,
Where brawny fishers, stout and tall,
Trip laughing down its craggy side;

Quaint bridges hung with mossy curls,
Where strings of polish'd ivy shine,
And troops of merry dark-eyed girls,
Who boast a beauty half divine.

My numbers fail—no human eye
A sweeter spot shall e'er behold;
And truth must utter with a sigh,
Not half its glory can be told!

The sylvan pomp and majesty,
Which there in harmony have met;
The bay which, in the neighbouring sea,
A sapphire seems in em'rald set,

Enslave the vision and the thought,
As charm on charm is quick reveal'd,
Till pleasure is to rapture wrought,
And language is in silence seal'd.

TO BIDEFORD,

IN PROSPECT OF LEAVING IT.

AND must I leave thee, my adopted home,
Nurse of my inspiration and my vaunt,
Thy broad strands silver'd with the salt sea-foam,
Each fairy inlet and each sylvan haunt?

What visions of blue skies, and purple hills,
And ocean-plains will rise upon my view!
And O, what melodies of birds and rills
Will fill the silence when I sigh, Adieu!

I cannot say farewell without a tear;
My spirit bleeds to think that we must part:
Yet there are claims more sacred and more dear
Than thine enchantments, darling of my heart!

Oft in my dreams, when far away from thee,
Amid thy matchless charms my soul shall stray,
To list the music of some wandering bee,
Or mark the sea-gull sporting in the bay.

Watching the stars burn through the silent sky,
Or the moon trembling in the rippled flood;
Or listening to the tempest's lullaby
To drowsy Nature in a neighbouring wood.

Treading again the valley of the Yeo,
A dreamer in the deepening hush of eve;
Or gliding where the waters gently flow
Beneath the shadow of sweet Oldiscleave.

Perchance the pilgrim by me hither led
Shall thread thy paths and syllable my name,
And talk of days when on thy banks I led
My dark-eyed joys, and married thee to fame.

'Twas here I felt that sweet, oppressive power,
Which beauty treasures up in solitude,
The Godhead's presence in the simplest flower,
The poet's passion and his gratitude.

Weak was my praise, but what I had I gave,
As some return for my continuous joy;
And when the minstrel slumbers in his grave,
Think of him kindly for his loved employ.

For each dumb beauty I have found a voice,
Thy peasants bless me in their uncouth tongue,
Thy merry maidens in my lays rejoice,
And all thy rivers warble in my song.

Yes, I do love thee, and if I forget
How much I owe thee, let my right hand fail
To prove its cunning, till the countless debt
Is wiped away by some melodious tale.

ST. MARY'S BELLS, BIDEFORD.

YE mellow tongued bells, how sweetly ye ring,
When bidding the people to worship their King;
I've heard you rejoice on a festival day,
But O for the chiming that calls us to pray!

Ye beautiful bells, far down in my soul
I feel the deep hum of your harmony roll,
And feelings akin to the angels' above
Steal into my spirit as holy as love.

Sweet bells of St. Mary, how many around,
Now resting in slumber, rejoiced at your sound!
The thought is most solemn, yet still it is so,
Death gives to your music the cadence of woe.

THE TORRIDGE.

HAVE seen thee in thy glory, like a virgin in her pride,
When a myriad suns were flashing on the bosom of thy tide,
As the arm of the Atlantic, stretching inward from the bay,
Roll'd its wave along the golden sands that pave thy water-way.

I have seen thee when the May-time, in her frock of Whitsun-white,
Strew'd thy banks with red rimm'd daisy flowers, like broken clouds of light;
And in Summer, when the cattle cool'd their hot hides in the stream,
And thy white town on the hillside look'd the picture of a dream.

In Autumn, too, I've watch'd thee, when the
rugged woods that slope
Beneath thy undulating heights seem'd like a
wither'd hope;
And in Winter, when the heavy clouds were
tempest-rent and grey,
And thy torrent, like a troubled soul, roll'd on its
turbid way.

In the morn, when the town lattices were rich with
golden fire—
At the noontide, when thy wavelets brush'd the old
bridge like a lyre—
In the even, when the dreamy sun behind the hill
went down—
And at night-time, when old Bideford made thee a
brilliant crown.

I have loved thee when thy shipping threw its
shadows o'er thy face,
As the stars came out all silently along the realms
of space;

But when the moon was mirror'd on thy ripples softly bright,
With a passion I have worshipp'd thee, my beauty and delight.

And had I but an artist's hand, I 'd paint some pleasant scene
Of thy iris-tinted waters in their richest summer sheen,
When our little ones like love gods are sporting in thine arms,
And I 'd envy not the lover of the Yarrow and its charms.

ONE OF THE OLDEN TIME.

THE good old Hugh of Devonshire,
A fine old soul was he;
And never a man was more renown'd
For deeds of Charity.

"My gold," said he, "is not my own,
My meadows, nor my kine;
But lent me by my blessed Lord,
Likewise my bread and wine.

"No jealous fears shall haunt my breast,
That men shall do me wrong;
My neighbours all shall sound my name
As 'twere a pleasant song.

"My yoke, my team, my plough, be theirs
In every time of need;
And blessings from the happy poor
Shall be my richest meed.

" And all my honest serving men
Shall joy my face to see:
For love, I know, begetteth love
In every country."

Thus spake the good old nobleman—
God rest his honest soul—
For he did honour to his word,
And kept his conscience whole.

At Easter and at " harvest home,"
New Year and Christmas-tide,
Both rich and poor were bidden to
His happy ingle side.

The fattest ox that roam'd his park
Was slaughter'd for the feast:
" Good things," said he, " were not ordain'd
Alone for king and priest."

His cellar sent up crusty wines,
Mead, apple-juice, and beer;
And naught was wanting that could fill
His merry men with cheer.

And every Monday morn when he
Would give his golden store
To spread his table for the week,
He " ne'er forgot the poor."

And every beggar had his dole:
" For thus it pleaseth me,
To give to him that asketh alms,
With blessing too," said he.

Alas! the stock is getting low
Of such good souls, I ween;
So let us set his memory
In Love's sweet evergreen.

LAND'S END.

I STOOD upon its barren rock,
And wander'd far in thought away,
As inward to the foamy bay
Wave after wave, in summer play,
Came bounding like a 'wilder'd flock.

Before me stretch'd the boiling main,
Which broke in fury on the shore,
Since full three thousand miles or more
The ocean-wave had hurried o'er,
In eager quest of land again.

O many a proud day I have known,
To love and honour consecrate;
Bright days when Nature sat in state,
When song first found in fame a mate,
And hopes as thick as stars were sown.

But when I grasp'd Old England's snout,
As she look'd out upon the sea,
The stern, the mighty, and the free,
A new joy leap'd to life in me,
And found an utterance in a shout.

Roll, billows, roll! I wildly cried;
I love your fierce and savage smiles
And laugh which o'er a thousand miles
Breaks in loud thunder on the isles,
The music of an ocean tide.

Then felt I, too, the royal joy
Which monarchs feel within their breast
When a new kingdom is possest,—
A feeling something more than blest,
The rapture of a happy boy.

STEADY, OLD LASS!

SONG.

STEADY, old lass, and bide thy day,
Maintain thy olden dignity!
For thou canst keep the curs at bay,
That fain would tear or worry thee.
Let but thy sea-dogs scent the wind
That bears the foe to Britain's isles,
And fleeter than the wildest hind
They'll scour the seas ten thousand miles.
Steady, old lass, and bide thy day,
There's might and pluck enough in thee
To keep all hungry hounds at bay,
Or sink them in the savage sea.

Steady, old lass! thy little rock
Is Europe's throne of liberty,
And well can bear the fiercest shock
While British heroes ride the sea.

We scorn the puny threat of knaves,
And bravely can their swords defy;
The love of life we leave to slaves,
When freedom is our battle-cry.
Steady, old lass, &c.

Yet, England, thou art only strong
When thy right arm of wrath is bare:
The nations fear to do thee wrong,
When thy old sea-dogs bark, "Beware!"
Let others glory in their wars,
Our glory is in being free;
And, by the help of Heaven, our tars
Will hold "our heritage, the sea."
Steady, old lass, &c.

THE VINE.

IN council met, my story says,
The gods decreed to give the praise
Unto that fair, fruit-bearing tree
Which gave the sweetest luxury:
Of course the goddesses were there,
And Venus, fairest of the fair.

"Go to, and search the world," said Jove,
"Explore each scented glade and grove;
The Autumn has a fragrant mouth,
Whene'er the wind is in the south;
Thither light tripping footsteps bend,
While Hebe to the east I send."

Thus spoke the god of thunder,—and
Forth Venus flew at his command,
Close follow'd by the Graces, who
Wait on the fair, their will to do;
"Success attend you!" Juno cried,
While Bacchus strove his joy to hide.

Next to the east sweet Hebe went,
Upon her errand deep intent,
And, crossing twice the burning line,
Saw Tagus and the castled Rhine,
And many a choice fruit gather'd she
From eastern and from western tree.

The orange in its golden robe,
The apple like a crimson globe;
Plum, peach, and ripe pomegranate too,
And figs as sweet as honey-dew;
And citron, nectarine, and pear,
Lush apricot, and cherries rare.

These, and a thousand dainties more,
Fair Hebe boasted as her store;
And oft the hopeful maiden thought
She held the boon the gods had sought;
So upward to the heavenly bowers
The goddess flew with fruits and flowers.

Meanwhile, much wearied, Venus lies
Asleep beneath the southern skies,

Within a deep and mantling shade,
A covert which some god had made;
When Cupid, wandering that way,
Resolved upon a little play.

For eyeing some sweet berries well,
He pluck'd the luscious muscatel,
And pressing with his finger tips
Its juice against her rosy lips,
She woke and call'd the draught divine,
And named the heavenly liquor, WINE.

Away in quest of Jove she flew,
When old Silenus met her view;
Then, borrowing sweet Hebe's cup,
She bore the sparkling nectar up,
Which Jove, enraptured, pass'd around,
And bade the Vine with fame be crown'd.

THE POET.

SPON a sunny bank he lay,
As fragrant as the new-mown hay
With rosy cammock flowers,
And watch'd the insect people pass,
Like jewels glancing through the grass,
Or lights in fairy bowers.

And then he gazed upon the sky,
Until his steady dreamy eye
Caught the sweet quiet there;
Which, settling on his restless soul,
Subdued it with a soft control,
Akin to that of prayer.

The gentlest summer gale that floats
Went whispering through the dancing oats,
And shot athwart the glade;

Then o'er the upland held its way,
And made the cornfield like a bay
Of billowy sun and shade.

There, where green hawthorns overhang,
" Ever at home with thee," he sang,
As if some one were near;
But not a soul was on the hill,
Save the dumb grist boy o' the mill,
Who rode with idle ear.

And as he sung, a radiant smile,
Like that which lights up Lundy isle,
When red suns sink to rest,
Play'd on the lonely muser's face,
Which told that joy a lodging-place
Had found within his breast.

Then rose he from his pleasant nook,
And strolling by a water-brook
Towards a favourite dell,
He thank'd his God that he could find
Sweet joy, apart from humankind,
In Nature's holy cell.

WILLOW LEAVES.

WILLOW LEAVES.

" There is no flock, however watch'd and tended
But one dead lamb is there.
There is no fireside, howsoe'er defended,
But has one vacant chair.

" The air is full of farewells to the dying,
And mournings for the dead;
The heart of Rachel, for her children crying,
Will not be comforted!"

LONGFELLOW.

THE ROBIN IS WEEPING.

This Ballad is founded upon a very old superstition, which is still prevalent in North Devon. When a Robin perches on the top of a cottage, or on a wall or gate belonging to it, and utters its plaintive monotone, which I have known it to do for a day together, the cottagers say it is "weeping," and that it is a certain token that the baby in the house will die.

THE robin is weeping, my baby dear;
Woe, sweet baby, woe to me!
Mine eye is dim with the swelling tear:
My heart is big with a new-born fear,
Lest the little bird weeps for thee.
Weet, weet, weet, the robin is weeping.

Weary, oh! weary the day-time wore;
Wearily wears the night for me.
Now the house-dog howls outside the door;

Again he howls, and my heart is sore,
'Tis a death-howl, babe, for thee.
Weet, weet, weet, the robin is weeping.

The robin is weeping upon the wall,
And a tiny new-made grave I see.
The sexton has been with a little black pall;
Four maidens in white—fair, sad, and tall—
Are bearing it tenderly.
Weet, weet, weet, the robin is weeping.

The robin is now on the garden-gate;
The mother is weeping, "woe is me!"
Her husband is mourning their childless state,
"O God, it is hard to suffer our fate;
God help us to bear it!" cries he.
Weet, weet, weet, the robin is weeping.

A SONG IN SORROW.

MY heart is sad, I cannot sing
Those merry strains I sang of yore;
I hear the thrush salute the spring,
But music charms my soul no more.

I see the bonny primrose peep,
And eye me as I pass her by,
But all that I can do is weep,
And turn my head away and sigh.

A moan escapes with every breath,
My bosom is a nest of fears;
The only thought I have is death,
And day in darkest gloom appears.

And wherefore am I troubled so?
And why aloud do I complain?
My home is the abode of woe,
My darling is bow'd down with pain.

Whilst day by day stand by her side
The tender nestlings of my dove,
And often win her smile of pride,
To see their patience and their love.

And yet I show a cheerful face,
Whene'er I mingle with my kind;
For there are none of all my race
Can heal the wound that pains my mind.

DEAD!

WE have a little patch of hallow'd ground,
Which Nature's lavish hand with gems hath sown,
Where richest meadow-grass did once abound,
But Death with his rude scythe has lately mown.

'Tis but the length of a beloved maid,
In childhood's sweet and ever happy prime,
And there, in faded loveliness, is laid
A flower as fair as ever bloom'd in time.

It seems a spot too beautiful for death
To make his loathsome and his sad domain;
Yet there he stalks with poison in his breath,
An epicure whose draught is briny rain.

Ah, me! that there forget-me-nots should blow,
And blossoms smile upon the fragrant thorn,
And daisies dress in sunny robes of snow,
And buttercups shine golden as the morn.

Yet true it is, and when the eastern sky
Is radiant with the coming of the day,
Thicker than shafts which in the rain-storm fly,
The sunbeams there in lustrous troops will play.

And there the sweetest winds that fan the south
Will often sweep across the hallow'd green,
And Summer, with her roses in her mouth,
Strews her chief beauties o'er the pleasant scene.

Oh, I was rich, in poverty's cold shade,
With this one priceless jewel in my hand,
Until a stranger, with his ruthless spade,
Deep buried it in our small bit of land.

Death's prison-house, a cage which holds the bird
That sang the sweetest in our merry home,
That piped the sweetest song we ever heard,
Until it droop'd its wing and sought the tomb.

I saw her when health's bloom was on her cheek,
My fresh sweet floweret of the middle May;
But never dreamt that in one fleeting week
My child would die and leave us but her clay.

I saw her too when fever dull'd her eye,
And burn'd the very vitals of her heart;
Had her last kiss without her sweet good-bye,
And, dumb with wonder, watch'd her life depart.

Then, agony of agonies! that blank,
Which never can be fill'd, amazed us all;
And visions came of death-pits deep and dank,
And darkness hung around us like a pall.

Sleep, moved by Pity, hearing one wild wail
Of sorrow from the desolated soul,
Pass'd by her sister with the visage pale,
And sought awhile the mourner to console.

'Twas all in vain! Love kept the babe alive,
We heard her speaking in each broken dream;
In spite of death our loved one would survive,
And "Precious Milly" was our only theme.

Next morn we sought her in her silent room,
And gazed until our eyes in tears were drown'd;
The sun was shining, yet 'twas deepest gloom,
As there our treasure lay in sleep profound.

And O, the wreck that cruel Death had wrought,
So sweetly ours when first the spoiler came;
" It is not her," was our first spoken thought,
And doubting thus we dared not speak her name.

Buried in rosebuds now our darling lies,
With one white valley lily on her breast;
And on her mound flowers looking to the skies,
Point sweetly to the region of her rest.

UNDER THE SNOW.

SWEET little loving thing, low, low, low,
Down in the cold, cold grave she lies;
Deep 'neath the daisy-knoll under the snow,
Silenced for ever her carols and cries.

Sweet little Dimpled chin, how she would dance!
Dear little Laughing eyes, how she would smile!
Still are her tiny feet now, and her glance
Beams not on me for a weary long while.

"Dead!" do my neighbours say? Death is a dream:
In the mid-Maytime she went out to play;
Daily I see her by meadow and stream,
Couch'd 'mid the goldencups, sunny as they.

Weep, my eyes, scalding tears, weep, weep, weep!
Bleed, my soul; throb, my heart, heavy with pain!
When shall my tender one wake from her sleep?
When shall I gaze on my beauty again?

Sweet little loving thing, low, low, low,
Down in the cold, cold grave she lies;
Deep 'neath the daisy-knoll under the snow,
Silenced for ever her carols and cries.

BY HER GRAVE.

HOW much love I buried,
My precious child, with thee!
A never-failing comfort
Thou ever wert to me.

And life's severest battle
I greeted with a smile;
For thou couldst ease each trouble,
And darkest hours beguile.

Thou little blessed spirit,
A seraph in disguise,
With joy upon thy forehead,
And heaven within thine eyes;

Why didst thou come, my sweetest,
Just like a thing of light,
A sudden flash of glory,
Bewildering our sight?

The day is dark without thee,
No eye with gladness beams,
My harp is hanging silent,
And gone my fairy dreams.

I miss thee, yet I meet thee
Wherever, love, I go;
But grasping at a shadow
Adds only woe to woe.

FAITH.

I STAND upon earth's shifting bank,
The grave beneath my view,
And watch the everlasting blank
Of never-ending blue;
And ask if that which meets the eye,
And which we mortals call the sky,
Is a deep, broad, and boundless sea
Betwixt us and eternity.

And in each cloud that sails across
The sunny realms of space,
I seek the sum of all my loss,
The beauty of her face;
My best beloved of humankind—
Where, where is she? I ask the wind;
Unheeding, it pursues its flight,
As speechless as the silent night.

Then up where happy angels sing
I strive with Faith to soar,
Nor pause till her unwearied wing
Is folded on that shore:
I pass the portals of the blest,
And seek her where the weary rest,
When, oh, the joy! her radiant face
Beams forth with an immortal grace!

DISCONSOLATE.

PALE, and with the mellow'd beauty
Poignant sorrow ever wears,
Doing melancholy duty,
Lone she sat in holy tears:
When a sound, mine ears assailing,
Made me list her stifled groan,
Solemn as the midnight wailing
Of a dying tempest-moan:

" Marvel not that I am weeping!
Didst thou mourn a child like mine,
Sobs would burst out in thy sleeping,
And my sorrow would be thine.
Child of children! like no other
Was my precious lamb to me;
God be thank'd I was her mother,
Nursing so much purity.
Bless her! pretty, joyous creature,
Quite an angel child was she;
And the sunshine of each feature
Made a little heaven for me.
Beautiful her form, and slender,
Soft and fair her rounded face;
Dark her eyes, and sweetly tender,
Beaming with the light of grace.
Seraph bright, and not a fairy,
Love her life, each word a song;
Unobtrusive, blithe, and airy,
How I see her dance along!
Oft the stranger, halting, bless'd her,
As she smiled within her bower;
Not a being but caress'd her,
As they would a lovely flower.

Milly's worth? can it be spoken?
See my answer in my eyes;
Tell me, ere my heart is broken,
Shall I meet her in the skies?"

CONSOLATION.

EEP on, my love, tears give relief,
Shed down the bitter rain,
Loosen the girdle of thy grief,
Souls crack with too much strain;
Know tears are comforters to woe,
To grieve is to unbend the bow.

'Tis hard, dear heart, 'tis hard to bear
A trial like to thine;
To see a form so passing fair
Grow more and more divine,
And, when each grosser part had gone,
Lie like a rose beneath a stone:
Yet better a sad weeper be
Than Heaven should be less rich for thee.

OUR DESTINY.

I STAND beneath the silent sky,
With upturn'd gaze, in mute despair,
And ask why came my darling, why
So soon to pine away and die—
Mine idol with the golden hair?

From the dark womb of mystery
We grope to life with half-closed eyes;
And what know we of that we see,
Of that which is, or that to be,
The unseen which in darkness lies?

I know not whence my being came,
But strive to know for evermore;
Life, the ethereal, vital flame,
Was it essentially the same
Ere flickering on this mortal shore?

If so, in the profoundest sleep
It lay in its august abode,
Far down in that unfathom'd deep,
Where Mystery and Silence keep
The outlet of an unknown road.

And Time, it is a heartless cheat,
In solemn league with cruel Death,
Upon whose fatal stage we meet,
And learn to dance with joyous feet,
Till the grim ogre chokes our breath.

Then idle is the plea of Love,
Truth, pity, anguish, cry in vain;
The soul, like a complaining dove,
May wail to the huge vault above,
Or melt in floods of scalding rain.

The tenderest links which bind us here
Are broken with a ruthless hand,
While Fate stands by with look severe,
And mocks when Love lets fall a tear
For those pass'd to the silent land.

MILLY.

NATIVE of the realms of light,
The radiant islands of the blest,
Where, nestling on an angel's breast,
She dwelt, an embryotic sprite.

From God's own sunny land she came,
A bright, consolidated smile;
We welcomed her to earth's green isle,
And gave the little thing a name.

We call'd her MILLY, and we thought
We never heard so fond a word;
'Twas like the sweet note of a bird,
With Nature's simplest music fraught.

And as our little darling grew,
We bent in worship o'er our prize,
And woo'd the smile from her deep eyes—
Two little orbs of silver dew.

Then Wonder came and eyed her cheek,
As Beauty placed a blush-rose there,
And kiss'd her lips and forehead fair,
And smooth'd her silken locks so sleek.

At length her little milk-white hands
Around our necks would fondly twine:
And O, the slavery divine
When fetter'd by those tender bands!

And so enchanting, year by year,
And lovelier wax'd our angel child,
That all who mark'd her manners mild
Proclaim'd she was too good for here.

And, sooth, she had a dove-like face,
Which proved a gentle soul within;
And such a way, all hearts to win,
With childhood's sweet and artless grace.

You might have call'd the maiden Love,
  Thinking from bright love-land she came;
  And she had answer'd to the name,
As little cherubs do above.

So close unto our hearts we bound
  Our tiny treasure, that the street,
  Which once had felt her pattering feet,
Became to us most holy ground.

And every fond, endearing name,
  Which parents to their idols give,
  We gave her—but this truth believe,
The tenderest she put to shame.

We call'd her Precious, Lamb, and Sweet,
  And Pretty cheek, Pet, Lily, Dove!
  Such names as mothers use above,
When they their missing infants greet.

But 'twas in vain: no word on earth
  Could shadow forth the love that burn'd
  Within our souls, and still we yearn'd
For one to syllable her worth.

And so we gave her smiles instead,
Sweet deeds of kindness, kisses, looks,
Pictures of seraphs, holy books,
And blessings with her daily bread.

If such the bud, how sweet the flower!
If such the dawn, how bright the day!
So Spring grew jealous in the May,
And slew her in her rosy bower.

It was a bitter, bitter night,
When Death for her wove warp and woof;
His storm-wings trailed across our roof,
And quench'd was every starry light.

Destruction rode the scorching blast
And charr'd the leaves upon the trees,
Until they fell, like swarming bees,
To mark the way which he had pass'd.

And oh! the agonizing smart,
When the great grim Destroyer's foot
Crush'd out the sweet life from our shoot,
And trod upon its tender heart.

Earth is a desert with her loss,
A dreary region, sad and dull:
With her our cup of joy was full,
Now naught remains but dregs and dross.

Dead—dead, and gone for aye is she!
Yea, every feature from the mind,
Like vapours scatter'd by the wind,
And we left, lost in mystery.

Yet still we yearn for evermore—
Nor can we deem it is in vain—
To see our darling's face again,
And walk with her the heavenly shore.

While hope in tears looks out to see
Her smiling on us from afar,
Our little shining guiding star,
To lead us to felicity.

IN THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH.

A WANDERER on the road of life,
I seek a purpose but in vain;
For heart and will are e'er at strife,
And thought lies sluggish in the brain.

"What is the profit, after all
Thy toil and striving?" mind will say;
"The wine we drink is mix'd with gall,
And Death defies us day by day.

"We see a beam steal from a cloud,
We mark a bud upon a vine;
While life goes dancing through the crowd,
And shade is lighted up by shine.

But ere the sun in fulness breaks,
Before the bud to blossom turns,
The one has lost its glory-streaks,
And the dead germ our nature mourns."

SILENT.

N the marge of Death's cold river,
Spirit broken, lo! I stand,
Calling, calling, calling ever:
" Come back to our pleasant land!"
Onward runs the tide, unheeding
All my bitterness and woe;
And my bosom, torn and bleeding,
Hears not e'en the answer, " No!"

" Come back, come, my little beauty,
Well I know how great thy love—
Yes, too well—come! thy filial duty
Ought to move thy soul above."

Pausing now to list her talking,
As she used to talk to me,
Naught I hear save strange feet walking,
And a murmur like a sea.

" Could I love thee, my sweet treasure,
More than I was wont to show?
Could a being yield more pleasure
Than I gave to thee below?
Tell, O tell me, in a vision,
If thou canst no word impart,
Come down from the bright Elysian,
Come and ease my burden'd heart!"

On the margin of the rivèr,
Spirit broken, still I stand,
Calling on her, calling ever:
" Come back to our pleasant land!"
Onward runs the tide, unheeding
All my bitterness and woe;
And my bosom, torn and bleeding,
Hears not e'en the answer, " No!"

WHO NOW WILL SING MY SONGS TO ME?

IN love with Nature more than fame,
I play'd the minstrel's part,
And penn'd my ditties as they came
Fresh bubbling from the heart.
And there was one who loved my lays,
And, warbling like a flute,
Oft carol'd them in bygone days—
But now her voice is mute:
Thus my sad burden hence must be,
Who now will sing my songs to me?

A vision in the future shone,
Which Hope had painted fair,
I saw my little loving one
Smooth down my silver hair;

Then, sitting by my ingle side,
Trill out my strains to me;
But she, the glory of my pride,
Sleeps by the willow tree:
Henceforth my burden here must be,
Who now will sing my songs to me?

I drop in by a neighbour's fire,
And hear his children sing,
And mark the matron and the sire
As happy as the Spring;
But every note is strange, and oh,
I feel so sad and lone;
For no one sings my "Patty Rowe"
In Milly's cheery tone:
And thus my burden e'er must be,
Who now will sing my songs to me?

And yet I think, when in my grave
My head is lying low,
They'll say my songs were sweet and brave,
And chaunt them as they go.
If not, no matter, for mine eyes
Will view a brighter sphere,

While one sweet voice in Paradise
Shall charm my ravish'd ear:
Till then my burden e'er must be,
Who now will sing my songs to me?

UNDER THE CLOUD.

'TIS love gives beauty to the earth,
And glory to the sun;
To other lives we owe our mirth,
And when they die 'tis gone.

But lately light was more than light,
For love had made it so;
Now day is darker than the night,
And all I see is woe.

Joy is a word that mocks me sore,
It has no meaning now;
My joy is gone for evermore,
And smiles forsake my brow.

What care I whether Spring returns,
With song and revelry!
The world is naught to him who mourns,
And it is naught to me.

I loved the seasons for her sake,
The bird upon the bough,
And meanest wildling of the brake—
But all is alter'd now.

The note that stirr'd my soul to sing
Is discord unto me;
A dreamy winter is the Spring,
With Death's deformity.

It was for her I sang and play'd,
For her I read and wrote,
And through the winding pathway stray'd
To catch a virgin note.

Then every dewdrop was a gem,
A halo crown'd each flower,
And night was Nature's diadem,
A miracle of power.

The tufted vetch, with sweet perfume,
Her purple blossoms spread,
And oft I pluck'd it in its bloom,
To wreath my darling's head.

And thus my love went with her love,
My eyes saw with her eyes;
And stranger things I mark'd above
Than those that light the skies.

Alas! the sweet enchantment's fled,
Life lacks its charméd ring;
And weeping willows shade the bed
Where Death has left his sting.

LOST! LOST!

TEN years ago our darling came,
With her faint baby cry,
And when we call'd her by her name,
A smile was her reply.

And every year reveal'd a charm
We ne'er had seen before,
A dimpled cheek or dimpled arm,
Or note of infant lore.

And as she grew, her little eyes
Went wandering everywhere,
Reading the secrets of the skies,
And all things counted fair.

The summer calm that dwells above
In heaven's ethereal blue,
Sank down into her heart of love,
And made it peaceful too.

And hence our souls to hers were bound
With life's most golden chain;
And when she died, how deep our wound,
And how acute the pain!

We never dreamt that she would die,
She look'd so much like life;
While joy's own image was her eye,
Unclouded by a strife.

All waited with a sweet caress
The sainted child to greet;
While rudest tongues she taught to bless
The music of her feet.

In vain they tell us that her sprite
Is now with Him who brought
A life mmortal into light,—
Despite the cheering thought,

I pine to see her smiling face,
As once I used to see,
And my lost darling to embrace
With love's idolatry.

If I forget her—I have tried—
And be as I have been,
I hear the gentle creature chide
My spirit for my sin.

So I must think of her, and weep
Till light enough is given
To show me God her soul doth keep
Secure for me in heaven.

THE TWO MINSTRELS.

NOW while hedgerows, high and swelling,
Vie with clover sweetly smelling
In the new-made hay;
Where the golden sunbeams shimmer
Through the leafy lanes of "simmer,"
Drowsy with the heat and glimmer,
I betake my way.

List! is that the skylark soaring?
What a passionate outpouring
Of his love and joy!
Hark, how loud his notes are trilling,
All my soul with rapture filling!
So sang I with soul as willing,
When I was a boy.

See, along the plains of Heaven,
Mimicking the fields of Devon,
Snow-white swaths are seen:

" Hear me, unseen meader there,
With thy scythe so keen and bare
Mowing down its lilies fair,
Lacking meadows green!

" Have you not a saintly stranger
Freed from sorrow, death, and danger,
Like a ray of light,
Fairer than your snowy showers,
Visiting your pleasant bowers,
Gathering celestial flowers,
Like your blossoms white?

" If so, 'tis my maiden Milly,
And, I pray thee, tell that lily,
In the fields of God,
Tuneful, from this desert springing
Oft I fly, the bright air winging,
But, lark-like, I cease my singing
When I touch the sod."

THE VISION.

YOU wonder, stranger, why I smiled,
And think I am distraught;
Just then the vision of my child
My tender fancy caught.

That little corner pane you see
Up in that window there,
Is far more precious unto me
Than gems, however rare!

Thither each morn my darling came,
And smiled her bright good-bye!
The sweetest picture in a frame
That ever met my eye.

Methinks I hear her tapping now
To give me one kiss more,
Her lips all laughter, and her brow
With gladness running o'er.

So oft beside my garden gate,
Ere starting on my way,
I turn, my soul with joy elate,
To see her at her play.

Thus memory will ever strive
To cheat old ruthless Death,
While Love my lost one keeps alive
With his immortal breath.

MY GUARDIAN ANGEL.

THERE are more sights than eye can see,
More sounds than ear can hear,
Sweet phantoms of the memory,
Which greet us everywhere.

We meet them in the glare of day,
We hear them in the night;
And subtler than a fabled fay
They flit before our sight.

'Tis not a poet's dream, I know,
That pictures things divine;
All have their guardian sprites, I trow,—
I feel that I have mine.

With lamblike look, the precious dear,
So fondly she will smile!
And then her pleading, how sincere,
How winsome is her wile!

Sometimes she leads me by the hand,
Where daisy-buttons grow,
Then down upon the golden sand
I hear the maiden crow.

Anon a hat and cloak she wears,
And shakes a mass of curls,
And then, with eyes suffused with tears,
I kiss all little girls.

At other seasons she will come
In pure celestial-white,
Then Heaven is found within my home,
And faith gives place to sight.

THE ROBIN.

BUBBLING from a tiny breast,
Like water from a spring,
Comes an old familiar song,
With its most pleasant ring.

Falling on mine ear at eve,
The shrill sharp notes are heard,
And I know it is the hymn
Of our domestic bird.

Thoughtfully I sit and still,
In my favourite chair,
When a little presence comes
With a celestial air.

Comes and pats me on the cheek,
All radiant as a smile,
And upon my heaving breast
Leans her fair head awhile.

Presently the passing bell
Gives out its monotone,
Robin stops his even-song,
And my sweet dream is gone.

THE ANNIVERSARY.

TWELVE weary moons have run their round,
Since in her winding-sheet we bound
And laid our lily underground—
Our lily o' the May,
And yet we gather here in tears,
With throbbing hearts and listening ears;
And as we bend above the dead,
We conjure up another bed
Where our sweet infant lay.

Yes, we do prize our poor dead dove,
And though the stars die out above,
There's nought shall quench our flame of love,
Or dull its sacred light.
And long as blossoms grace the spring,

And golden-pinion'd finches sing,
For her sweet sake we'll come and strew
Upon her grave her violets blue,
And daisies silver-white.

With arrowy dartings here and there,
The screaming swifts shoot through the air,
So did they when Death sought our fair,
And blanch'd her comely bloom.
True heralds they of pale decay,
Though only in the sun they play;
For when the May-bush is most sweet,
And lilacs scent the city street,
Our fairest fill the tomb.

THE VOW.

THERE is a vision of beauty and love,
Haunting me ever by night and by day,
Seen in the pearly-white cloudlet above,
Meeting me, wander wherever I may.

Sometimes the dear little spirit will come,
Blessing my soul with a joyous surprise;
Tripping so light with a sparkle, say some,
Ne'er seen before in a pair of black eyes.

Then, with an exquisite thrill of delight,
Upward I soar like a bird on the wing,
Bounding away in the strength of my might,
Singing as happiness only can sing.

Sometimes my darling will come in her shroud,
Pale as the snowdrop that blows in its nook,
Shadowy, fleeting, and vain as a cloud
Painting its vapoury form on a brook.

Then, with a pang which the desolate feel,
Sorrow shrinks back in the gloom of her cell,
Waiting till Death in his silence shall seal
Life with its muffled joy ringing its knell.

Lips that were red as the ruby had she,
Cheeks with the bloom of the sweet-scented June,
Blithely she sang like a bird in the tree,
Nature her ditty, and Love the sweet tune.

Shall I forget her, dear light of my home?
No! by the dust where the beautiful sleep:
Would she forget me were I in my tomb?
No! and for her I will evermore weep.

THE VOICE FROM THE CLOUD.

I HAD a dream, a heavenly dream,*
A vision bright and fair;
I saw a virgin by a stream,
With loosely flowing hair;

And falling down unto her feet
The snow-white robe she wore:
An image so divinely sweet
No eye had seen before.

She smiled just like the angels do,
To draw me to her side;
And as I near'd the maiden, lo!
She seem'd beatified.

* It may seem strange, but I had this dream a few days before my dear little Milly died.

I ask'd her pleasure, when a book,
Held in her lily hand,
She open'd, rich with many a nook,
Of some most pleasant land;

And as she turn'd its pages o'er
My soul was glad to see
The beauties of so fair a shore,
With stream and branching tree.

And there were lakes unswept by storms,
Which lay bright hills among;
And plains alive with seraph forms,
Who sang a holy song.

And in the morning when I woke,
I marvell'd in my mind,
And thus unto my love I spoke,
As she her ear inclined:

" O such a vision, dear, of joy
I've witness'd in my sleep;
I would that naught should it destroy,
Its glory I would keep."

She, listening, made me no reply,
But hid it in her breast:
" It was a glorious dream," said I,
And sank again to rest.

A week fled, and then came a day
Which brought a sadder dream:
I saw my darling pass away,
O'er death's mysterious stream;

And peering down into the deep,
I sought awhile to learn
If my beloved, now asleep,
Would unto me return.

I question'd Heaven, to know if she
Might answer to her name:
But silence was the stern decree,
And not an echo came.

Then in my agony I cried,
In language loud and wild,
" O God, forgive me if I chide!
Where is my precious child?

" She whom I treasured as my soul,
My joy, my life, my light!
Must she, down with the grovelling mole,
Know one perpetual night?

" Or is she wandering, lorn and bare,
In some mysterious shade,
She whom I shelter'd from the air
Which made the floweret fade?"

I paused, but answer there was none,
Then wept and cried aloud,
When, " Hear him, my beloved Son!"
Came sweetly from the cloud.

" I am the Resurrection," said
A Voice in gentle tone;
" And she, thy little darling maid,
Is neither lost nor lone:

" Beside Life's everlasting stream,
With angels hand in hand,
Watch'd by the maiden of thy dream,
She walks the heavenly land.

" She joy'd all lovely things to see,
When in that world of thine;
Then suffer her to dwell with Me,
Where all things are divine!"

" Enough," I answer'd, " Blessed Lord,
Faith sees her with thy Son,
My soul reposes on thy word—
Thy will, O God, be done!"

ELLIE DALE.

VEIL thy bright face, O golden sun!
Put on thy gloom, O smiling sky!
Lament, ye streamlets, as ye run!
And wail, ye winds that whistle by!

Be silent, O ye merry birds!
Weep heavy tears, ye pleasant trees!
Turn, milk of joy, to bitter curds!
And murmur death, ye happy bees!

My hope is broken from its stem,
My sweetest rose has lost its red;
My crown has miss'd its richest gem,
The glory of my life is fled.

Alack! Alas! what doth avail
This dark and lonely life to me?
I'll die and sleep with Ellie Dale,
'Tis thus, O Death, I conquer thee!

SONNETS.

" ——— for me,
In sundry moods, 'twas pastime to be bound
Within the Sonnet's scanty plot of ground,
Pleased if some souls (for such there needs must be),
Who have felt the weight of too much liberty,
Should find brief solace there as I have found."

WORDSWORTH.

TO W. C. BENNETT,

AUTHOR OF BABY MAY, ETC.

I DID not like the sonnet, for to me,
Who love the wildness of our Devon lanes—
Fantastic as the flowers on frosted panes—
Through which I roam the freest of the free,
It seem'd the very prison-house of thought;
A cage in which no mounting lark should sing,
Lest he should mar the plumage of his wing,
And pipe a tamer note by being caught:
Yet I must own poor Hartley Coleridge wrote
Choice music in its little sunny cell,
And that on Wordsworth's melody I dote
Who made his bee hum in its foxglove bell;
And now to pay it homage I am prone,
Such is thy classic and convincing tone.

FAITH.

UPON a rock, engirdled by the sea,
With brow uplifted, heedless of the storm,
I saw a noble and majestic form,
Standing as if in silent reverie;
Her right hand closed, as if her grasp held what
Was solid substance and not empty wind,
And yet I nothing could perceive, save that
She seem'd to clutch at something with her mind:
Beyond the boundary of all things known,
With penetrating eye and soul intent,
She saw a realm with starry glories sown,
Which to her vision a rich splendour lent;
Often I mark her with a look serene
Gazing with rapture on the Great Unseen.

HOPE.

WITH buoyant spirit and an eye of fire,
She tript along the margin of a stream,
Where Expectation, following Desire,
Flew on before her with a golden dream.
Fair was the vision as a sunny gleam
Which plays at summertide about the noon,
And chaste as is the pale ethereal beam
Which steals at midnight from the silver moon.
It was a picture full of pleasant things;
Sweet Joy was painted like a ruddy youth,
And in the foreground Love with shining wings
Was toying with the radiant locks of Truth;
While, in the distance, Pleasure was at play
Where roses blossom'd on an endless way.

MEEKNESS.

A GENTLE, modest, and retiring dame,
With white hands folded on her tender breast,
And mild brown eyes which know no fiercer flame
Than those of dovelings in their mother's nest,
No angry passion does her soul molest;
For in some hidden unfrequented way,
With fair Humility her constant guest,
And a tame lamb, the maiden loves to stray:
A soften'd glow of glory bathes her brow,
The sweetest smile plays round her lovely mouth,
Her voice is like the music of the bough
Which vernal winds make in the sunny south,
Low as a ripple o'er a polish'd stone,
And soft as is the turtle's fondest tone.

TRUTH.

A TALL and comely virgin, with an air
Of freedom in her every step and mien,
With open eye, and like the white-rose fair,
She walk'd majestic o'er the springy green;
Of all the Virtues she did look the queen,
As by the hand she led a little boy,
So generous and trusty, that, I ween,
His name was Candour and in her employ:
A plummet and a triangle she bore,
With which she tried the principles of things,
And though she was a favourite with the poor,
She had but little fellowship with kings.
A cloudless sun appear'd her radiant face,
Which shed a glory over all her race.

INNOCENCE.

I MET with her one day among the flowers,
In company with Peace and Purity,
With eyes, like violets in April showers,
Which told a tale of sweet security;
'Twas in the month that brings the red-rose-bud
I found her, with her breath as sweet as May,
When clouds like shallops through the welkin scud,
And earth was keeping high and holy-day;
O! how her laughter made the valleys ring
As bounding o'er the hillocks on she sped,
More happy than a lark when on the wing
His stream of song he pours down on our head!
Her soul was stainless as the snowdrop fair,
And for her cheek no blush e'er crimson'd there.

GRIEF.

A SOLITAIRE, she loves to live alone,—
For little company the mourner needs;
Her chief delight is in a graveyard stone
Half buried with the charnel's rankest weeds.
A smiling babe is pictured in her mind—
And faithful love will keep the vision there—
While her sweet comfort lies in being kind
To woe-worn souls who kindred trials share;
Her treasures are a flaxen ringlet bound
With crimson silk, and two wee socks of white,
A sash which once a tiny waist enwound,
And, as if made from summer rays of light,
One very small but richly 'broider'd frock:
Few things in number, yet a precious stock.

PATIENCE.

UPON the sea-shore sits the gentle maid,
Her steadfast gaze upon the distant line,
Eyeing the white dots skimming o'er the brine,
Watchful, unwearied, calm, and undismay'd;
The wanton winds are playing with her hair,
And softly glows her forehead and her cheek,
Red are her lips and like ripe cherries sleek,
And white as marble is her bosom fair:
'Welcome, sweet breeze, health-giving, fresh, and pure,
Forerunner true of my long absent love!"
The maiden sings, then sighs, "What I endure!
But all is known to Him who rules above;
Forbear, my soul, his providence to blame,
He gives and takes, and blesséd be his Name!"

RESIGNATION.

AT eventide within a grot she sate
—A prayer of Christ* close lying by her feet—
Not hers to question the decrees of fate,
Or sigh for aught beyond her cool retreat;
A brook ran rippling by her mossy seat,
And with its water she her thirst did slake,
In coarsest fare she found a dainty sweet,
And ate the berry growing on the brake;
The ivy trailing down her rocky wall
Shone with the lustre of the setting sun,
And one sweet lily, like a saintly nun,
Gleam'd where the evening ray was wont to fall,
While light—which sought a silent place to die—
Linger'd like moonbeams in her soft blue eye.

* "Thy will be done."

WRITTEN IN LONDON.

YE simple beauties of my native fields!
O ye are doubly precious to me now,
The pleasure which your homely beauty yields
With happiness my spirit doth endow!
This busy bustle of the city street,
The fever for excitement seen in all,
The hurried tramp of Mammon's restless feet,
The tinsell'd great, and the poor raggéd small,
All make me long for that sweet home where I
Shall change this Babel's murmur for the trees',
When London's gloom before the sun shall fly,
And I shall roam the meadows with the bees;
No round of false enjoyments I desire,
While Nature warms my bosom with her fire.

NON-RECOGNITION.

THE soul is the divinity of man,
A thing too subtile for our mortal sight;
The grosser part of us our fellows scan,
Pleased with the lamp and careless of the light.
The Summer, with her countenance so bright,
Shines oft in vain and vainly shows her flowers,
Till winter comes with his tempestuous showers,
And trailing garments darkling as the night;
So is it with the sun when in his might
He proudly marches through the noontide sky,
Few pause to view him in his raiment white,
More haste to see him, steep'd in crimson, die;—
The mint smells sweetest 'neath the crusher's tread,
And grass gives little scent till it is dead.

EPHEMERA.

AS transient as a ship-track on the sea,
The impress of a billow on the sand,
The cloud's fleet shadow o'er a grassy lea,
Or footprint on a dry and dusty land,
Is the renown of half the minstrel band;
They write their names in snow, the sun outshines,
And every vestige of their frigid lines
Rude Time rubs out with his relentless hand;
It is not so with a true poet's thought,
That lights our mental zenith like a sun;
And when the bard's Titanic work is wrought,
And down the drowsy west his course has run,
Whilst dark, and darker, grows the gloom of night,
Star after star is lit up by his light.

TO THE TORRIDGE.

SOFT sleeping in the mellow'd light of eve,
I watch thy waters stain'd with upland-green,
And mark the sun, all glorious, take his leave
Of golden cornfields and the heavens serene.
The deep repose that slumbers on thy wave,
The lake-like beauty of each wood-fringed bay,
The murmuring music of each mimic cave,
And banks that wind along the river way:
O how I love them with my soul's best love!
To me thy charms, like youth's, are ever new,
The mirror'd image of the cloud above,
Or young moon floating in the welkin-blue,
Or when the Night, ere she to robe begins,
Sprinks thy fair breast with heads of silver pins.

EARTH.

THIS is the spot where my soul's life doth lie;
Year after year have made their annual round
Since he was laid beneath this tiny mound.
And yet the tear you see is in my eye;
I never shall forget his agony:
I left him for a moment ere he died,
And when he found I was not by his side
—They said—my babe without me could not die;
So then I stretch'd myself upon his bed,
And told him I would go to heaven with him,
His pretty face soon lost its fever-red,
And in a moment his bright eyes grew dim;
Then like a lamb he slept—my darling child,
I fear, without me is not reconciled!

HEAVEN.

LOOK up, poor weeper, dost thou see that light,
That lovely star that glitters in the west?
It may be there thy missing one doth rest,
And adds a brighter glory to the night;
Or that small speck now mirror'd on thy sight,
And sparkling like a gem upon thy tear,
May be the eye of thy lamented dear,
And looking down to fill thee with delight:
I will not say, fair mourner—cease to grieve,
It is love's chiefest pleasure thus to weep;
Light wedded to a shadow doth receive
A richer splendour—Death's dark shade is deep.
Yet know, but for the darkness of Death's night,
Our home in Heaven would never shine so bright.

LEGENDS.

LEGENDS.

" A deeper import
Lurks in the legend told my infant years,
Than lies upon that truth we live to learn."

COLERIDGE.

THE LEGEND OF THE LOGAN.

THE legend of the rocking-stone
The bardic muse would sing,
The brave renown which doth enshrine
That wonder-working thing.

Amid a lusty warrior-band,
Barbaric, fierce, and rude,
Charged with betrayal of his tribe,
A stalwart Briton stood.

His eyes were black as pitchy night
And burn'd with savage ire;
His hair shone like a raven's wing
Beneath the solar fire.

Within their granite council ring
Cornwallia's chiefs appear'd,
And in their midst Penhaligon
With long and silvery beard.

Spake the great Druid, " Say, Treglown,
What answer canst thou give?
Poldregan and Tregarthen taught
No traitorous wretch should live.

" Thy God, thy country, and thy chief,
Treglown, thou hast betray'd;
And to the stranger thou hast sold
Thy mother and thy maid."

When thus the grave Damnonii spoke:
" Unto the Logan hie,
And let him try the stone of doom,
If that move we will die."

Away unto a hoary crag
Beside the angry sea,
Treglown the haughty culprit sped,
To prove his destiny.

" Stretch out thy hand!" the elder cried:
" A righteous power lies there;
That rock which shields the innocent,
The guilty will declare."

" The test!" spake great Penhaligon:
The people held their breath—
He touch'd it, but behold it stood
As motionless as death.

Then rang along the rifted cliffs
Of rugged Castle Treyn
The wildest shout of savage joy
Was ever heard, I ween.

" Ascend that peak, thou perjured wretch,
Base caitiff, traitor, slave!
And take thy hate of freedom down
Into thy ocean grave!"

A silence solemn as the tomb
Hung heavy on the air:
" Leap!" shouted the old white-hair'd chief;
" Leap!" echoed everywhere.

When, like a sea-bird from a rock,
He shot down suddenly,
And all that follow'd was the moan
Of the mysterious sea.

ELENA.

IT is a lay of the West Countree,—
A ditty with a tear,—
As tender a tale of faithful love
As ever smote the ear.

O bonny was the merry May
As ever a May had been;
And merry was the bonny bird
That warbled in its sheen.

And bonny too the greenwood shade,
  Where her true love would rest;
And when the Summer warm'd the glade
  A very cuckoo's nest?

But where doth fair Elena stray,
  All woe-begone and lone,
With hair dishevell'd, visage pale,
  And speechless as a stone?

Why wanders she in pathless ways
  With her lack-lustre eye,
And vacant stare, and folded hands?
  O tell the minstrel why.

She met her maiden at the door
  Where her true love had lain,
For three long weary, weary weeks,
  In agonizing pain.

" O tell me all the truth," she cried,
  " Ere you from me depart;
Is my love dead?"—" Yes," sobb'd the maid;—
  That one word broke her heart.

His life was hers, she lived in him,
  Without him she was dead;
Thus hap 'd it in the early morn,
  She left her widow'd bed:—

The earth was very dark below,
  The heavens were bright above,
So she wrapt herself in her winding-sheet,
  And lay down with her love.

JEMMO'S CURSE.

T was the golden harvest time,
And life went merry in the fields,
Until St. Mary's even-chime,
When labour unto pleasure yields.

In mazy dance, and pleasant song,
Young maidens mingled with the men,
And cheer'ly sped old Time along,
As "necks" were cried from hill to plain.

When hard by where the Torridge flows,
Upon the hillside in the east,
Some sheaves are seen in shiny rows,
The promise of a future feast.

" To-morrow, if the day is fine,
We'll stack this corn," old Jemmo cried;
" To-morrow, boys, be here at nine,
To-morrow's noon shall see it ride!"

But He whose thoughts are not as ours
Oped wide the windows of the sky,
And pour'd his sweet refreshing showers
Upon the meadows hot and dry.

The cattle leap'd for very joy,
The thirsty landscape wore a smile,
" Butter and barley now, my boy!"
The milkmaid chuckled by the stile.

But Jemmo's eye is dark with rage,
And passion boils in Jemmo's blood,
With Heaven he will the contest wage,
And dares to curse the corn and God.

That night, while stretch'd upon his bed,
Awoke by thunder, wind, and rain,
He lifted his ungrateful head
And cursed the corn and God again.

The morning breaks, away he hies
To seek the cornfield on the hill,
When, lo! a scene confronts his eyes,—
And now his cursing tongue is still.

A whirlwind from the mighty Hand
That holds the desolating wind
Had swept the vile blasphemer's land,
And scarcely left an ear behind.

That very morn the ebbing tide
Bore Jemmo's golden sheaves away,
And soon his crop was floating wide
Among the billows of the bay.

And now unto this hour they tell,
That, when the sickle wounds the grain,
The storm that on old Jemmo fell
Returns to curse the spot again.*

* This is a very old tradition, which is as fully believed in at the present time as that the sun will rise at his appointed hour; I have often heard the inhabitants of Bideford say, when they see the field under the sickle, "We are certain to have rain soon, for they are cutting Jemmo's field." The field is situated near the Barnstaple road turnpike gate.

THE "YETH" HOUNDS.

THE reds are in the eastern sky,
I wot they are for wind or rain:
For the sun has got a coppery eye;
And list the thunder of the main!

"How loud the tumbling billows roar!
God save the wight upon the sea—
For that ground swell is evermore
A merry signal unto me.

"I hear the storm shriek o'er the land,
And see the furies ride the clouds
Above the wreck upon the strand,
With drown'd men dripping in the shrouds.

"O for a wild and starless night,
And a curtain o'er the white moon's face,
For the moor-fiend hunts an infant sprite,
At cock-crow, over Parkham chase!

"Hark to the cracking of the whip!
A merry band are we, I ween;
List to the 'Yeth' hounds' yip! yip! yip!
Ha, ha! 'tis thus we ride unseen."

A lady weeps within her hall,
And fairer than the snow is she;
Alas! alas! so black a pall
Should shroud her little dead babyé.

A lady weeps within her hall,
"My little lost one," crieth she,
"No holy priest came at the call
To shrive my soul and christen thee!

"O, I had roses on my cheek,
And I had summer in mine eyes,
But roses fade when winds are bleak,
And joy is never fed on sighs.

"I was a moon with one bright star,
A dove with one wee doveling dear,
Away the light has wander'd far,
I mourn my doveling with a tear."

The mother's hair is trailing down,
And hides the coffin like a pall,
"My lovely babe can wear no crown,"
She wails within the silent hall.

She wails within her silent hall,
And fairer than the snow is she,
"Alas! alas! so black a pall
Should shroud thee, little dead babyé!

"Thou mad'st thy heaven of my breast,
And I found mine within thine eyes,
Woe! woe for thee, thou canst not rest,
Bereft of me and Paradise!

"And ever, when the nights are dark,
A phantom-hunter on his steed,
They say, will chase thy spirit—hark!—
O whither do those horsemen speed?"

"Good lady, prithee do not fear,
Thy Lord is waiting at the door;"
Poor heart, she open'd it to hear
The "yeth"-hounds yipping on the moor."*

* The above ballad illustrates a superstition still lingering in the rural districts of North Devon. I knew an old matron who was a firm believer in the existence of the moor-fiend and his hounds, and that every unbaptized infant that died became the prey of the "Yeth" hunter.

THE END.

CHISWICK PRESS:—WHITTINGHAM AND WILKINS,
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By the same Author.

POEMS.

KENT AND CO.

Opinions of the Press.

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It is what Poetry was in the sweet days of Burns and Goldsmith.—*Morning Post.*

Honest, fresh, lusty verses by the Postman of Bideford. He is the clover lark, and must not pine for the golden cage.—*Athenæum.*

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He produces rhymes equal in harmony to Metastasio—who wrote in the most musical language upon earth.—*North Devon Journal.*

Fresh from the fountain wells of nature and feeling.—*Woolmer's Gazette.*

The liquid air seems filled with the melodies of the olden time as we read 'May' and 'June.' The Lion Flag is an Ode of great merit—nothing more spirit stirring has been written on the war.—*Civil Service Gazette.*

Mr. Capern is one of those few men whom God has endowed with that rare gift genius.—*Birmingham Daily Press.*

The 'Reverie' seems to us one of the most beautiful Poems that our day has produced.—*Somerset County Gazette.*

England will confirm the verdict of Devonshire, and hail in Edward Capern no unworthy addition to the long and glorious list of her sweet singers.—*Ladies' Companion.*

A striking example of the pursuit of Poetry under difficulties.—*Spectator.*

By the same Author.

He may justly be comforted with Burns in the thought that it is more worthy to reflect honour on his profession, than for his profession to reflect honour on him.—*Western Times.*

Looking at the circumstances under which these Poems were written, we must regard the volume as one of the wonders of the age.—*Weekly Times.*

BALLADS AND SONGS.

KENT AND CO.

Opinions of the Press.

The Rural Postman has listened to good advice. He is still, though known and favoured, a minstrel of the lanes and villages, writing songs and ballads, generally, to melodies of his own. . . . . The verses are of the same hearty, fresh, and healthy class; the rhymes chime together lightly and musically, the sentiment is warm, the expression rich and truthful. We mark, indeed, an advance in Mr. Capern's compositions. Without being more elaborate, which would imply degeneracy, considering the author's peculiar purity,—they exhibit a finer polish, and an imagination more creative, than his former writings. Nevertheless, the merit of Mr. Capern as a poet lies, and always will lie, in his genuine outbursts of feeling, affection, patriotism, and especially love of nature, for the "love of love" is strong within him. Entering into an unbidden partnership (so to speak) with the thrush, the linnet, and the finch, he pipes on his oaten reed, and adds something to the meadow or woodland chorus. It is easy to show, however, that his strain is not one of monotony. There is something of Tom Hood's quality in an apostrophe commencing,—

"Christ befriend thee, poor old man."

"The Bereaved One," "The Little Scarecrow," "Polly Lee," are examples which illustrate the versatility. "The Song of the Little Hop-Pickers," is one we can imagine the villagers singing after reading it once. But that the Rural Postman is the Rural Postman still, is told by the pretty simplicity of a fond but foolish lyric, "Sammy went a wooing." It is such a rhyme as this, we fancy, that sets the girls and boys singing in Devonshire.—*Athenæum.*

Every bird which sings amid his breezy hills, every flower which blooms within his verdant valleys he has glorified in his songs. One feels that it is such men as this hearty and healthy rural postman who help to preserve the muscle of Englishmen, and the nerve of English thought . . . . Mr. Capern has chosen the right path, let him follow it to its end; and as he moves along we are but too happy to receive his gifts of wayside flowers. The lyric, for the reason we have already given, and which places the Scotch so much above us, demands here a gifted exponent, and that exponent Edward Capern may yet become. All we need do now is to cull a few charming lyrics from the volume before us, and if our readers are disposed to forego those, and such as those, for the bare chance of droning didactics, or any other description of poetry whatever, all that we can say is, that we are contented with what is already pulsing with life, and joy, and beauty.—*Critic.*

Mr. Capern's songs are distinguished for their sweetness and cheerfulness. . . . He sympathises thoroughly with country-folk, and enters into their sports, their loves, their humble hopes and fears, their difficulties and dangers.—*Leader.*

By the same Author.

Contains many pleasant rustic songs and Devonshire ballads, rhymed simply and often tenderly. Mr. Capern hears the linnet, and the robin, and the finch warbling through the dale, while

> " Pipes the thrush in merry mood;
> Poet-laureate of the wood:"

and he reasons,

> " Do not minor minstrels sing
> Sweetly with the forest king?
> So may my untutor'd lay
> Swell the music of the day;"

and it is really to the music of the day that his verses make addition.
Examiner.

The cottager's children, the wild flowers, the little maiden scaring the rooks from the corn, the shy lass waiting at the stile for her sweetheart,—these are the themes he loves. His songs are sung in the sultry hay-field, and around the cosy ingle in winter. There is room in the world of song for Capern as well as Tennyson.—*Dublin University Magazine.*

How he burst upon the world with his casket of poetical jewels is assuredly known to all lovers of true poetry.—*The Poet's Magazine.*

Mr. Capern is one of those fortunate writers who gain not merely admirers but friends. His whole creed, his whole teaching, his whole life may be summed up in one word—love. Edward Capern's songs had all the freshness of true poetic talent. One could see that he did not write of birds and flowers because it was fashionable to do so, but because in his very heart of hearts he *loved* them. The voice of a real joy rang through all his pleasant pages. *Here* was no rhymer writing for effect; here was a man who rambled every day through the green lanes of Devon, stopping every now and then to listen to the cheery carol of the thrush, or bending down to pluck the earliest primrose, and so of birds and primroses he sang. .... Village scenes and village loves, flowers and birds, *these* were the subjects of Mr. Capern's first volume. In his second he has not much widened his range; as why should he? Will not a man write best about that which he knows best and loves best? Nor can such subjects be very readily exhausted. Varying as nature they are as everlasting.—*Sharpe's London Magazine.*

His ballads and songs are charming. We can well believe that his songs are sung by many a cosy ingle in beautiful North Devon. He is a poet of the people. The robin,

> " Which ever in the haunch of winter sings,"

is no dearer to the dwellers in quiet hamlets and lonely cottages than such a poet as Mr. Capern.—*The Plymouth Mail.*

The true spirit of poetry pervades every line.—*The Bideford Gazette.*

There is a breezy sunshiny freshness about the spirit and language of these [Ballads and Songs] that proclaims the poet's love of nature and his admiration of his native county. In addition to the truthfulness of the portraiture the volume abounds with imagery of great poetic sweetness and natural tenderness.—*The Western Times.*

These songs are, as were his former ones, the natural outflowings of a true and noble heart, inspired with a love of all things beautiful..... Such a poet is a benefactor to his race, and the love with which the children of Devon receive the words of their native poet, show how fully they appreciate, and how dear to them is the son with which God has blessed them.—*The Birmingham Journal.*

By the same Author.

THE DEVONSHIRE MELODIST.

BOOSEY AND SONS.

Opinions of the Press.

Not only betokens the true poetical instinct, but exhibits a metrical knowledge to be derived from experience alone. If Edward Capern be in reality a postman, his friends may greatly improve his position by sending him to London and making him take some of the work out of the ballad-writers' hands now prosecuting their career in the metropolis . . . Altogether there is much attraction in these little pieces, and we should select from the twelve "My Bonny Bell," "Come list, my love," and "Dorky May," as being especially fresh and charming.—*Standard.*

Deserving of extensive popularity.—*News of the World.*

The name of Edward Capern, the poet-postman of Bideford, is familiar to many of our readers through the medium of the numerous songs and lyrics which he has given to the public during the last few years. We have more than once favourably noticed his volumes as they respectively appeared, and now we have before us one of a fresh character, inasmuch as it gives music with the words, and music of an attractive kind. A series of songs introduce us to "My Bonny Bell," "When the Cuckoo comes," and other productions affording pleasant company . . . The accompaniments and general arrangements of the whole by Mr. Murby evince a musician like and masterly power which is highly creditable to that gentleman's taste and talent. He has evidently bestowed great care on his work and deserves warm eulogy for his part of the volume, "Robin is weeping," is particularly tender and delicate in its style of accompaniment, and the "Christmas Bells" is about as "telling" a bit of mirth and melody as we have listened to for some time. The words of the latter are among Mr. Capern's happiest effusions, proving that he has the right spirit within him—sweet as the May-dew on his native thornbloom, fresh as the night-wind in his native valleys. —*Sun.*

There is a good deal of real poetry in the rural postman's verses. His thoughts are natural, touching, and expressed with simplicity and considerable elegance.—*London Illustrated News.*

This is a collection of melodies from the portfolio of that seraph of song who has wooed the muse among the hills and vales of merry Devon. Already it has had a large sale even in comparison with the books of the season. But it would be a poor compliment to the genius of the postman-poet of Bideford to say that these songs will greatly increase the reputation of Edward Capern. There are few song writers at present who for vigour and simplicity can stand up against Edward Capern, and in this collection there are several pieces which will rank among the best specimens of this species of composition. "Christmas Bells" is one of the happiest . . . It is one of those pieces which contains, as it were, the condensed essence of every one's thoughts expressed with the rhythm, the simplicity and the liveliness which are the heart and soul of a song.—*Trewman's Exeter Flying Post.*

The fame of our poet is too widely spread over the nation to need any of the common ways of puffing to make him known. What reader that loves poetry simple as nature, beautiful as the flowers of the field, warm as sunshine; has not Capern's poems among his choice treasures of the muses . . . It would be strange if a poet should not have in the common acceptation of the phrase "music in his soul," who has a soul of music: it would not therefore be surprising to find that some of these airs to these airy songs are of the poet's own composing.—*Western Times.*

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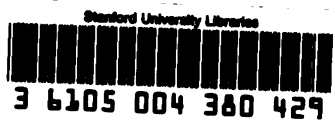

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